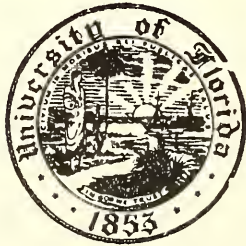


NEW ADVENTURES

WILMON BREWER

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NEW ADVENTURES



NEW ADVENTURES

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WILMON BREWER

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TO MY WIFE

Katharine More Brewer

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PREFACE

Almost all the original poems and most of the translations which appear in this book have afforded the adventure of precise and difficult form.

Of the many poetical patterns represented, some have appeared in my earlier books called *Sonnets and Sestinas* and *Adventures in Verse*. But a number of them are new to English poetry. The poems called "The Soldier" and "Life and Fame" are the first English examples of the octave in identical rhyme. The sonnets entitled "By Weir River" and "The Pheasant" are written in trochaic meters which were suggested by the work of the early German poets Fleming and Bürger and which now appear for the first time in the English sonnet. "A Villanelle of the Devil" is the only English example of the very long villanelle. And "The Bell" is the only villanelle in any language which has the usual order of refrains reversed.

Goethe's sonnet called "Nature and Art," the sestinas of Rückert and Lope de Vega, and the three villanelles of Boulmier — all important in literary history — are made accessible in English for the first time.

Where it seemed possible to give interesting information about the subject or the form of any poem, I have added an introduction. In the case of a few poems which refer to the Second World War or to other events of a particular time, I have noted the year in which they were written.

The book closes with "Sir Pellenore," an Arthurian tale which hearers have greatly enjoyed.

WILMON BREWER

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM PAINTINGS BY SAM CHARLES

Sam Charles (1887-1949) was a friend of Maurice W. Parker, from whose work the illustrations were taken for my *Adventures in Verse*. Each of them had the unusual distinction of proficiency both in music and in art. Sam Charles was famous in his earlier years as a teacher of music, a composer, and a pianist. He was regarded as unequalled in his playing of Debussy. In the year 1927 he retired from teaching, and afterwards he was known chiefly as a landscape painter.

The Shroud facing page 69

The Bell facing page 145

The painting used for this illustration of *The Bell* is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Simons L. Roof.

OCTAVES

SICILIAN OCTAVE*

I stopped the cart right by Marina's door,
The street was vacant at the break of day.

She came out smiling. I began to pour
A whispered tale of love. Ah, it was gay!

But then my curséd little donkey tore
The stillness with one loud, resounding bray.

Dark heads appeared at windows — more and more,
And my Marina fled abashed away.

*This poem has been set to music by Robert West of
Arwes Music Publications, Elmira, New York.

IN EGYPT

When rushing clouds conceal the Egyptian sun
And rain sweeps over deserts wide and drear,
Seeds on bare plain and dune, observed by none,
Wake in soft flowers with colors rich and clear,
When night prevails and glowing day is done,
On every side the friendly stars appear.

And, when Death's shadow ends life's brilliant day,
May our lost loved ones smile beside our way.

THE SOLDIER

THE SOLDIER

Translation from Italian folk poetry

The octave which I have called *The Soldier* was written in southern Italy, probably during the seventeenth century. It was published for the first time at Naples, in a collection of folk poetry made about the year 1800. The unknown author appears to have been a man of some education, for he wrote his poem in standard Italian. An octave treating the theme somewhat differently occurs in the dialect of Calabria, and a third octave treating the theme still differently appears in the south Italian dialect of Carpignano. The opening line of *The Soldier* was echoed in a longer poem, from still another part of southern Italy.

All three versions of the octave have the medieval pattern, with two rhyming sounds alternating through the poem. But they are influenced by the Renaissance form, identical rhyme, which was invented by Italian poets of the fifteenth century. The identical rhyming words "stay" and "go" keep alternating at the end of the lines. This kind of rhyme was used first in the sonnet. In Italy and in a few other countries it soon was introduced into the octave and occasionally into other poetical forms. About half the lines of *The Soldier* have also a form invented by Italian poets of the sixteenth century, twofold identical rhyme. One rhyming word occurs at the end of the line, and the other words occur within the line.

THE SOLDIER

Translation from Italian folk poetry

I go, then stay. — Ah, shall I go or stay?
I long to stay and yet I ought to go.
Because of my dear bride I long to stay,
Because of honor I should arm and go.
I see her tears and vow that I will stay;
But what will all men think, unless I go?
'Tis pain for me to go and more to stay:
Then either course is painful, stay or go.

LIFE AND FAME

LIFE AND FAME

Translation from the Portuguese of
Pedro de Andrade Caminha

The Portuguese author Pedro de Andrade Caminha was born at Oporto about the year 1520. In his youth he became chamberlain of Don Duarte, a son of King John the Third, and he spent much of his rather long life at court. Caminha seems to have found his position congenial, for he wrote a large number of his poems in honor of his patron and of other members of the royal family. He was on friendly terms with many leading Portuguese authors of the time, especially with the poet Antonio Ferreira. And his best known poem is an elegy commemorating Ferreira's wife, Maria Pimental.

Caminha seems to have written elegant verse in most of the lyrical forms which were fashionable during the Renaissance. Like many Portuguese of the sixteenth century, he wrote both in his native language and in Spanish. Caminha's poetry circulated in manuscript and was admired by his fellow poets and by other readers of the time. In his later years he collected his work, but publication was prevented by his death, in the year 1589, and did not occur until two centuries afterwards.

A number of Caminha's poems were occasioned by his courtship of a lady whom he called Phyllis. Among them is the octave which I have entitled *Life and Fame*. Somewhat ironically, in view of the sentiment expressed in the poem, we cannot now identify her. This octave has the Renaissance pattern, with two rhyming sounds alternating through six lines and a third rhyme in a couplet at the end. The poem is almost the only Portuguese example of twofold identical rhyme. The words "life" and "fame" alternate not only at the end of the six lines but also in the opposite order within them. Then both words alternate within the lines of the final couplet.

LIFE AND FAME

Translation from the Portuguese of
Pedro de Andrade Caminha

A poet often times gives fame and life
To many who had neither life nor fame.
But Phyllis gives a poet fame and life,
The verse in which he sings her, life and fame.
How shall he fail to win both fame and life,
Who sings of such a life and of such fame?

If you wish fame and life, then sing of Phyllis,
For life and fame breathe in a song of Phyllis.

TRIOLETS

GOLDEN LEAVES

(Summer, 1949)

The maples have shed golden leaves
Upon last winter's mat of brown.
The sudden hint of fall deceives —

The maples have shed golden leaves.
It's June, but parching nature grieves
And only light showers patter down.

The maples have shed golden leaves
Upon last winter's mat of brown!

THE WREN*

A wren sang in the vine today
Until the soft mid afternoon.
Less loud and joyous than in June,
A wren sang in the vine today.
It seemed a gentle farewell tune,
As toward the south he slipped away.
A wren sang in the vine today
Until the soft mid afternoon.

*This poem has been set to music by David Strand
of West Coast Music Service, Kingston, Washington.

SONNETS

SINGLE SONNETS

NATURE AND ART

NATURE AND ART

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Goethe's sonnet called *Nature and Art* appeared towards the end of a short romantic comedy, *What We Bring*, which he wrote and produced in the year 1802. Shakespeare had included one or more sonnets in the dialogue of several of his early plays. Goethe followed his example not only in the comedy but also in his tragedy, *The Natural Daughter*. Both Shakespeare and Goethe were followed soon after by Tieck and other German dramatists.

Goethe's comedy celebrated the opening of a new and better theater in the town of Lauschstäd, about forty miles south of Weimar. It commended the improvements made by the architect. In the course of the play a young woman called Nymphe, who at first desired only nature and primitive simplicity, came to realize that art is not the enemy but the friend and partner of nature. She recited the poem as lines of an old-time author that she once had learned by rote and now at last understood.

The poem seems to express also a change in Goethe's feeling about the sonnet as a kind of poetry. At first he regarded the form as too restricting and difficult for poetical expression, and he even wrote a sonnet on this theme. Later he realized that with due care a poem in the form of the sonnet can be made graceful and effective. His *Nature and Art* refers to this fact. Goethe uses the term "art" to mean discipline required for artistic achievement and then in a wider sense of the discipline needed for all success in life.

NATURE AND ART

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Nature may seem the opposite of art,
Yet they combine before we are aware.
No more do I give one exclusive care,
I find in each the other's counterpart.

'Tis worth an honest effort at the start:
If we serve art with zeal and patience, bear
Its course of daily toil and not despair,
Free nature glows again within the heart.

So is it with all excellence of soul:
The self indulgent falls in sad disaster,
While hoping to ascend a noble height.

If you seek greatness, first learn self control,
By his restraint we quickly know the master,
And freedom comes to us by doing right.

BY WEIR RIVER

Charming little River Weir!
First a babbling woodland brook
Courses down, with sweep and crook
Where the mossy stones appear.

Then a sunny stream runs clear,
Past low alders, in each nook
Blue forget-me-nots. And, look!
Bright the redwing settles near.

Then through woods the water glides, —
Cardinal flower along the sides —
Bearing flakes of yellow foam.

So a modest life may flow,
Gladdening those who come and go,
Through still ways to its ocean home.

THE PHEASANT

THE PHEASANT

On the pane, like loudest hailstones cracking,
Our cock pheasant's beak pecks with a will.
Perching outside on the window sill,
Wings upraised, he hammers, never slacking.

In the glass he's eagerly attacking
Shines his brilliant image, with its bill
And its fiery eyes opposing still,
Undeterred by all his savage whacking.

As we make him fly, again deploring
That each day he leaves new stains and scoring,
We are sure it proves he has no wit.

Yet sage Addison would strive to hit
His own shadow, caning walls and flooring,
And he told the world it kept him fit!

THE PHEASANT

The bird which is the theme of the preceding sonnet appeared on our lawns at Great Hill early in May of the year 1945. He was one of many ring-necked pheasants released in the woods during the previous week by a club of sportsmen.

He was a glorious creature that we never ceased to admire. His beak and eyes were golden, his head was dark blue with scarlet wattles, his body blue and purple illumined with iridescent sheen, his wings were bright yellow, and his legs and feet were golden. Through the summer and autumn he paraded continually about the lawns and the neighboring fields and groves, occasionally ascending a boulder to survey the landscape. Sometimes he visited a nearby golf course or some other more distant place and was absent for as much as a day.

We gave him the name Bawcock — a title used often in Shakespearean comedy, and also a sound resembling his usual loud crow. While stalking about the grounds, he would stop suddenly and rise to his full height, then utter this distinctive sound and loudly beat the air with his wings. He had other but less frequent notes. At times he would stand at the edge of a grove or a hayfield and utter at intervals a loud, sharp click. Occasionally his notes would suggest the ringing of two sledge hammers descending alternately on a drill. Or in moments of high excitement he would pour out notes which reminded us of a military band. And, if he chanced to be close to us, we could hear him converse with himself in a continual, low, sweet murmur.

Bawcock showed no fear of human habitation. He explored the cellar windows, occasionally giving a smart tap on the glass. Often he stalked along the veranda,

and once or twice he scrambled slowly over the veranda roof, looking into the windows of the second story and startling any of us who were inside. He soon learned to fly up into a feeding station, set near the house for the wild birds, and he would spend half an hour at a time pecking up the grain and seed. Meanwhile his beak made a loud rapid drubbing against the floor of the station. Towards the middle of the summer he came regularly to a first story window, at an hour when the sun reflected his image in the panes, and did battle with his likeness in the glass.

In his own way he was unafraid of man, for sometimes he would approach confidently within a few feet of us. And one day, when carpenters were making some repairs on the outside of the house, he amused them greatly by his bold and curious interest in their doings. But he maintained a certain reserve. If we moved in his direction, he would depart with long strides or run lightly away to a safe distance.

When Bawcock first arrived, two hen pheasants accompanied him. One of them soon disappeared. The other came daily in the late afternoon to the feeding station and pecked busily but quietly at the bird food. Often as she was leaving, Bawcock would approach. She would retreat coyly along the shrubbery, and he would follow. Suddenly she would take wing, and he would fly after her with loud clucks. Rising to a height of twenty feet, they used to continue in a circle round the house and then veer off and become hidden by intervening trees.

After a few weeks the hen appeared one afternoon with a family of nine downy chicks. They skirted the edge of the hay, ran quickly to the cover of shubbery, and soon withdrew out of sight. In the following days they continued to appear. Soon their number was re-

duced to six. Daily they wandered in the neighborhood of the house and grew in size. When their wings became strong enough, they would fly into the feeding station with their mother. At first all the family crowded in at once. As they grew larger, there was room only for four at a time, and the others would peck and scratch after seed which had fallen underneath.

During the first week or two, Bawcock seemed to ignore his family. Then he began to lead them in their exploration of the grounds. Usually he kept at a majestic distance from them. Now and then he condescended to be near and even to crowd with three of them into the feeding station! Many times the whole family used to visit the region of the chicken yard and pick up corn or other chicken feed, which had scattered near the fence, outside or even inside within reach through the wire. They seemed to enjoy outwitting the angry lunges of the roosters.

Once early in the summer Bawcock flew over the fence, to devour some grain in the middle of the yard. The return trip proved unexpectedly difficult, apparently because the area inside was too small for the running start which he needed to fly back over the fence. For a long time he strode indignantly from one corner of the yard to another, looking for an opening in the wire, while the chickens, then rather small, huddled in a group and tried to keep out of his way. At last he flew to the low edge of the chicken house roof, clambered with agility to the summit, and escaped. But evidently he decided that in future he would take no further risks.

As autumn approached, the young pheasants grew as large as their mother and began to assume their mature plumage. When iridescent purple showed in the feathers of the male birds, Bawcock seemed to resent

their presence. The young cocks appeared no longer with the rest of the family. For a while one of them came to the feeding station, alone and in furtive haste. Then we saw them no more.

Bawcock and the hen pheasants continued to parade about the lawns, through the bright month of October. Early in November they vanished, we thought after a sudden incursion of foxes. Later a single hen came to the feeding station — at first limping and rather wild, and returned often until late in December.

So Bawcock with his family passed from our sight. But he remains a glorious memory.

THE BUTTERFLY BUSH

To this tall shrub with spikes of purple flower
The butterflies are come. Sunning their wings,
They taste sweet honey at the noontide hour.

Great sulphur swallowtails seem orient kings,
And darker ones flash gold on velvet black,
Red admirals shine, the brimstone lightly clings,

The fritillary gleams — fawn on his back
And silver spots beneath, in gorgeous style
The tiger, moving, leaves a brilliant track.

As if fair, lavish summer with a smile
Had culled her richest beauty here today
And let it live upon the bush a while.

Then, as a zephyr comes and branches sway,
All rise in air and gaily sail away.

ON HILLS OF GALILEE

On hills of Galilee long, long ago
Rich purple lilies, touched by April air,
Nodded among the stones and grasses, where
Clear, sunny rills of springtime leap and flow.

And Jesus, passing, saw them bend and glow
And loved their bloom — so brief, so soft and rare.
They told him of our Heavenly Father's care
Even for the humblest creature here below.

Still on those far off Galilean hills,
When mild winds come, the purple lilies nod,
Still our fair lilies dance by northern rills.

And, as they move above the verdant sod,
Their native beauty, calming human ills,
May tell the wonder and the love of God.

SONNETS FOR THE CHRISTMAS TIME

THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES

(1944)

The Christmas candles shine this frosty night
By our Atlantic shore. And westwards near
And far unnumbered others glow with light
Until the mild Pacific waves appear.

Eastward in lands which long have known the blight
Of war, with nights of blackness and of fear,
Once more the Christmas candles gleam pure white
And even to ruin give their hope and cheer.

Soon may the whole world see them shining bright,
Wherever man may live or ship may steer,
While future time shall wing its endless flight
Gladdening the close of every circling year.

On all the Earth may war and hatred cease,
While faith and wisdom bring a lasting peace.

DAWN SEEMS TO GLIMMER

(1945)

Dawn seems to glimmer in the winter sky
Behind the pointed spruce tops; frost lies pale
On the sere weeds and grass; the biting air
Is still, as with a strange expectancy.

High in the east the brilliant Morning Star
Flames white — alone in all the darkened heaven.
At last the long and bitter night is done
And soon will shine a clear and splendid day.

On all our saddened Earth men wait in doubt,
Like nature in this tardy, lingering morn.
May they too see the pure and glorious star

And may it be a herald of good cheer,
Proclaiming the dread night of war has gone
And leaves a clear, a calm and tearless time.

DECEMBER WINDS THROUGH TREETOPS

December winds through treetops bare and high
Roar in the darkening woods, as night draws near.
Over the meadow grasses, brown and drear,
The first chill flakes of snow begin to fly.

Yet, where the barren alders and the dry
Swamp aster stiffen in the waning year,
A little willow opens without fear
Its downy blossoms to the louring sky.

We think of friends, who in the winter's gloom
May feel the darkness fall and cold wind sting
And hear the coming storm in woodlands boom.

At such times may the pussy willow bring
New hope and comfort with its modest bloom,
Prophetic of the song and flowers of spring.

THE SAILING WEDGE

Above the sheltering arborvitae hedge
A strange, wild calling stirs the frosty air.
Now overhead there glides the sailing wedge
Of strong winged geese! Before we are aware,

They fade afar. They leave the northland sedge
And, drifting over forest gray and bare,
Dark pond, and shining bay, and surf beat ledge,
Follow the shore and ever southward fare.

But our kind thoughts wing from this ocean edge
And over storm tossed land or sea they dare
To range, from tropic palm to arctic sledge,
Again to seek our loved friends everywhere

And wish them all a Christmas bright with cheer
And joyous days through all the coming year.

A ROBIN TWITTERS CLEAR

A robin twitters clear this Christmas morn!
Across a snowy world his glad notes ring.
And now he flits to white spruce boughs, that fling
Their crystal shower down — on the cold wind borne.

See! others come, redbreasted, on the wing,
Sporting among bent cedars, as in scorn
Of long, bleak night and leafless wood forlorn,
To give our winter day a thrill of spring.

Ah robins, would that you might surely steer
A course through azure skies and lightly veer
Your trackless way to all our well loved friends,

Then brilliant in December sun appear,
To bear a season's message of good cheer
For every one, before this glad day ends.

ON THE MEADOW POOLS OF ICE

On the meadow pools of ice, on hard white snow
And the bare icy wood that darkens round
Colder the northeast wind begins to blow
And cause a dismal roar and crackling sound.

We shiver, as with careful steps we go,
Making our way over the slippery ground..
A fine hail patters, black the dense clouds flow.
Then, as all seems in deepening tempest drowned,

Far south the sun gleams on this world below,
Lighting the sky and treetops jewel crowned,
And fills the meadow with a golden glow,
While the chill air turns warm. So we have found

A thought of some dear friend, though far away,
Sheds light and cheer upon a winter day.

OTHER LYRICAL FORMS

EPITAPH

O Death, why take my boy to your dark shores?
He might have seen ripe years — and still been yours.

THE SWALLOW SONG

THE SWALLOW SONG

Translation from the folk poetry of ancient Greece

In the first days of spring, children of Rhodes, carrying an image of a swallow, used to go from house to house and sing what was called *The Swallow Song*. The custom began before the dawn of history and continued through ancient times. And other children of Rhodes still followed it, with a similar song, as late as the mid nineteenth century.

THE SWALLOW SONG

Translation from the folk poetry of ancient Greece

She comes, she comes, the early swallow!
Fair hours begin, fair seasons follow.
In front her breast is snowy white,
Her slender wings are black as night.

Bring out once more from your rich store
Wine, tarts, and cheese; or, lacking these,
The swallow stoops to take brown bread and oatmeal
cake.

What shall we have, before we go away?

Thanks, if you give. If not, we'll make you pay!
You'll see the doorpost sway, we'll tear the door away.
We'll steal your wife, who weaves inside,
She is so very light and small.
We'll take her for a merry ride!

Come, open! Open at the swallow's call!
And, when you give, O give with glee.
Not sad old men, but merry children we!

THE OUTDOORSMAN

But I will climb the mountain trails once more
On Northern Peaks, while summer is serene.
Some trails I've made, and all of them I've seen
And loved in sun and rain through years before.

I've scaled each high, bare ridge and trod the floor
Of every deep and forested ravine.
But I will climb the mountain trails once more
On Northern Peaks, while summer is serene.

By solemn Hermit Lake I can ignore
The wasting sickness that has made me lean,
And on the Castles joy of life is keen.
Soon winter comes and death knocks at the door.
But I will climb the mountain trails once more.

FIRST OF MAY

FIRST OF MAY

The following ode uses a classical form of verse called Alcaic stanzas. This form was invented and often was used by the Greek lyric poet Alcaeus, who was a native of the island of Lesbos and lived a stormy life a little before and after the year 600 B. C. His friend and fellow Lesbian, Sappho, also used the form, in at least one of her poems.

An Alcaic stanza has four lines without rhyme and is arranged in a carefully prescribed pattern. The first and second lines have each eleven syllables, the third line has nine syllables, and the fourth line has ten. The first line may be divided as follows: a separate initial syllable, then two trochaic feet, then a dactyl, and then a trochaic foot and a long concluding syllable ($\simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq | -$). The second line is like the first. The third line may be divided into a separate initial syllable and four trochaic feet ($\simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq$). The fourth line is divided into two dactyls and two trochaic feet ($- \simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq | - \simeq$).

Horace introduced Alcaic stanzas into Latin poetry and seems to have preferred them to any other lyric measure. His best odes of this kind have admirable vigor and variety of cadence and are regarded as models of the form.

During later classical times and the middle ages, no one seems to have attempted Alcaic stanzas. But poets of the Renaissance who wrote in Latin revived them, and they became a favorite measure in Latin poetry of modern times. Among authors who used them with distinction, were Milton, Addison, and Gray.

About the middle of the eighteenth century Klopstock introduced Alcaic stanzas into German poetry. A num-

ber of German authors followed his example, of whom the best known is Voss in his translation of Horace. Tennyson introduced the form into English poetry, with his *Alcaics to Milton*.

FIRST OF MAY

Our May Day comes to us as a rare delight!
The shrill alarm clock wakes us at gray of dawn,
While robins pipe. In chilly dusk we
Drowsily rise and put on warm clothing.

We tiptoe down the stairs, past the sleepers' doors,
And on through twilight rooms for a brief repast.
Together eight gay little baskets
Perfume the air with the mingled sweetness

Of flowers, prepared and sprinkled the night before —
Narcissi white and golden, magnolias fresh
As waterlilies, cherry blossoms,
Hyacinth purple and white and crimson.

A larger basket holding them neatly set
We carry out of doors, where the dew shines gray,
Southwest a yellow moon is setting,
Eastward the clouds are aflame with sunrise.

Wide open rolls the door, there the yellow car
Stands waiting, and near by the forsythia sprays
Are massed in water, golden richness.
Carefully loading our freight of springtime,

We glide forth, just as, red over distant hills,
The sun appears and shines on the soft green lawns,
Narcissi star-like in the hay, and
Plum trees, a vision of snowy blossom.

Down highways strangely quiet we pass and see
Night's hoarfrost gray on low lying grass and bush.
The redwing sings upon an alder,
Maples are blossoming red above us.

By silent houses lilacs are thick with buds,
Young peach trees dream, suffused with their rosy bloom,
And in a dewy apple orchard
Bluebirds alight with a gleam of azure.

But, when we near the home of some well-loved friends,
We stop the car — aside in a hidden spot.
With furtive steps we seek their threshold,
Carefully scanning the quiet windows.

We hang a flower filled basket upon the door
And lay forsythia sprays on the mat below,
Then, fearing dog or early riser,
Silently flee and resume our journey.

So here and there we stealthily leave our flowers,
While thrushes warble and finches sweetly trill,
Till, as we give our latest greeting,
Sunrise has vanished in summer morning.

TRANSLATIONS FROM GOETHE

BECALMED

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Deepest calm upon the ocean —
Not a ripple stirs the main,
And the pilot in commotion
Searches all the liquid plain.

Not a breath from any quarter,
Fearful calm as of the dead!
On the endless waste of water
Not a wave will lift its head.

HEATHER ROSE

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Once a boy espied a rose,
Red Rose in the heather,
Loveliest flower the morning shows;
And he ran and stood quite close,
Glad they were together.
Red Rose, wild rose, wild rose red,
Red Rose in the heather.

Said the boy, "I'll pick you, flower,
Red Rose in the heather."
Said the rose, "I'll stick you,! Cower,
Or you shan't forget this hour,
When we were together."
Red Rose, wild rose, wild rose red,
Red Rose in the heather.

Then the heedless boy must pluck
Red Rose in the heather.
Red Rose showed her thorns and stuck;
But she could not change her luck,
And they left together.
Red Rose, wild rose, wild rose red,
Red Rose in the heather.

THE VIOLET

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A violet opened on the green,
Hid in the grasses, quite unseen,
A beauty loving flower.
Then came a shepherdess near by
With dancing step and smiling eye,
And sang in carefree style.

Ah, thought the violet, if I were
Spring's loveliest blossom just for her,
Oh, but for one short hour!
That she might take me up to rest
Set gently on her sweet young breast,
With her, with her
Just for a little while.

But ah, the maiden, coming fast
Saw not the violet, as she passed,
And crushed the little flower.
It faded, murmuring with a sigh,
Yet I am happy, for I die
By her, by her,
Beneath her foot at least.

MIGNON'S SONG

MIGNON'S SONG

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister* the hero saved a rather mysterious little girl named Mignon from ill treatment by a company of mountebanks and adopted her as his own. A few days later she sang to him a song, which expressed her longing for her native Italy. The first stanza describes the country, probably the mild region of the Italian Lakes. The second stanza tells of the villa which Mignon associated with a happier past. And the third pictures the route southwards over the Alps. Goethe seems to have recalled the St. Gotthard Pass, which he had visited a few years before.

The poem expressed also Goethe's own intense desire to visit Italy. It was written in the year 1784. Two years later he set out on that long and famous Italian tour which was the turning point of his life, an experience even more important than Milton's tour of Italy a century and a half earlier. And the poem is the happiest expression of a yearning which Germans continually have felt for Italy and of a longing felt by all northern peoples for the milder south.

Beethoven and Liszt set Goethe's poem to music, and the French composer Thomas adapted it as a celebrated aria of his opera *Mignon*. The poem suggested to Byron his introduction to *The Bride of Abydos*. And Macaulay noted that statues in Florence reminded him of Mignon's words about the sculpture in her former home and that he could think of no other two lines in the world which he had rather have written.

MIGNON'S SONG

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Do you know the land where the citron tree's in
bloom?

The golden orange lights the arbor's gloom,
A gentle wind comes from the soft blue sky,
The myrtle stirs, the laurel nods on high.
Do you know indeed? Ah there, ah there
With you, O my beloved, I would fare.

Do you know the house? On pillars rests the roof,
There shines the hall, its alcove gleams aloof,
There marble figures stand, as if to say,
Poor child, why have they taken you away?
Do you know indeed? Ah there, ah there
With you, O my defender, I would fare.

Do you know the mountains and their clouded path?
The pack mule climbs in mist and fears their wrath,
In caves there live the dragon's ancient brood,
The cliff descends and over it the flood.
Do you know indeed? Ah there, ah there
Our way leads up. O father, let us fare!

THE SHROUD



Sam Charles

One grave, then another, is beginning to stir

THE SHROUD

Translation from the German of
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The sexton looks down in the stillness of night
From a tower on the gravestones in order.
The moon at its full has made everything bright,
The churchyard shows clear to the border.
One grave, then another, is beginning to stir:
There steal forth the bones, now of him now of her,
All white with the shrouds round them trailing.

They glide to the opener turf, and each lich
Is eager for gambols and prancing —
The young and the poor and the old and the rich,
But shrouds are hindrance to dancing.
And, since neither shame nor the chill can restrain,
All shake themselves free, and the grave clothes remain
In shadow aside near the tower.

There's lifting of leg bones and shaking of heels,
With ghastliest gesture and miming;
They crack and they snap, as they whirl in the reels,
Like castanets that are chiming.
And, in a wild humor, the sexton can hear
The Old One, the Tempter, say low in his ear,
"Go, steal from them — one of their sheetings!"

'Tis thought, and 'tis done. In a spasm of fear
He drops it inside near the portal.
The moon is still shining, so white and so clear,
Again he looks down on their dances, poor mortal!
Now this and now that one is leaving their play;
Then, swathed in a shroud, he is drifting away,
And lo, he slips under a gravestone.

But one is still lingering. He claws with his feet
And raps on the gravestones that lour,
No comrade has wantonly taken his sheet,
He scents it at last in the tower.
He runs to the door but retreats in dismay,
(Good luck for the man!) in the moon's yellow ray
It glimmers all over with crosses.

The shroud must enfold him, before he can sleep
The moon is now paling in glory.
He seizes the tower's Gothic carvings that sweep
In spirals from story to story.
Ah, how the poor man must repent his mad jape!
From carving to carving the gristly white shape
Glides up, like a long legged spider.

The sexton shrinks, quaking, back under the bells;
And soon, where the gargoyles are resting,
A bony hand clutches the platform and tells
That now comes the end of his jesting.
The moon it is setting behind the dark hills.
But clear, though afar, the early cock shrills,
And backward falls headlong the monster.

BALLADES

THE NIGHTINGALE

THE NIGHTINGALE

Translation from the French of
Théodore de Banville

The eminent critic Sainte Beuve was the first to revive the ballade, a kind of lyrical poetry in a prescribed form, which had been neglected since the time of the Renaissance. He began a poem of this kind but completed only two stanzas.

It was Théodore de Banville who made the form distinguished among authors of his time. Banville regarded the ballades of the fifteenth century poet François Villon as the best examples, and he wrote his own first ballade in emulation of Villon's celebrated *Ladies of the Past*. He included the poem in his volume called *Odes Funambulesques* (1857). He wrote it as a ballade in the shorter form, which has twenty-eight lines of four iambic feet.

But he preferred the longer and more difficult form, which has thirty-five lines of five iambic feet, and he wrote all his other ballades in the longer form. Banville including two poems of this kind in his *Odes Funambulesques*.

Then in the year 1875 he published his volume called *Thirty-six Joyous Ballades*. These poems — some comic, others serious, all written with fluency and apparent ease — are his most brilliant work. They were emulated in English ballades of the shorter form by Andrew Lang.

One of Banville's ballades, called *The Nightingale*, dated July 1869, expresses well the peculiar charm of the French countryside.

THE NIGHTINGALE

Translation from the French of
Théodore de Banville

Under the poplars at the river's brim
Two artless lovers, young and charming pair,
Are straying. He has seen her smile on him.
Down, to her face, a moonbeam filters there;
Her dark eyes shine with joy, like diamonds rare.
Twilight deepens — that strange, electric hour!
Then to a silent country turning dour
And a vast heaven where tints of sunset pale,
Warbling, joyous, with voice of godlike power
From the darkened wood there sings the nightingale.

Submiss yet proud, the maiden seems to swim
In love's enchantment, now but first aware.
She quivers, like an aspen light and trim.
Then, as the moonlight silvers her dark hair,
He takes her offered hands, so small and fair,
And finds them softer than the jasmine flower.
Beyond the stream, where deeper shadows lour,
Distilling pearls in an ascending scale,
That flash down to a ground once dull and sour,
From the darkened wood there sings the nightingale.

Softly the lovers parley in the dim
Poplar grove, as they feel warm, scented air
Bathing their foreheads at the water's rim
The maiden lets the young man's shoulder bear
Her slender weight, still wondering if she dare!
With wings uplifted in a starlit bower

And breast turned to the evening airs that scour,
His throat ecstatic, through the dewy vale
To the wild cliffs that in the distance glower
From the darkened wood there sings the nightingale.

The song descending like a brilliant shower
Enchanted with its misty, moonlit dower,
The bird looks toward high heaven, where light clouds
sail,
And feels more rapture than day's larks that tower.
From the darkened wood there sings the nightingale.

OF FAMOUS SHIPS

OF FAMOUS SHIPS

The trireme of Themistocles,
Victor at Salamis of old;
Or that of Pompey, who with ease
Vanquished the pirates in their hold;
And Cleopatra's barge of gold
Borne on the Cydnus deep and clear —
Where are these vessels long extold?
Where are the white snows of last year?

The galley that through stormy seas
To Vinland carried Leif the bold;
The ships which bore the Genoese
Westward and found a world untold;
The Golden Hind of Drake, who trolled
Around the globe and knew no fear, —
Where are these craft of famous mould?
Where are the white snows of last year?

And Nelson's Vanguard the fresh breeze
Will seek in vain, when waves are cold;
No more the Monitor shall wheeze;
Stricken, the Alabama rolled;
Dewey's Olympia was sold
Or sank a target stripped of gear.
Where are these great ones, scarce condoled?
Where are the white snows of last year?

The Constitution still may hold
A place, with the Constellation near.
Where are the rest? Their knell was knolled.
Where are the white snows of last year?

ON SHINY METAL WING

ON SHINY METAL WING

December thickets, where some dead leaves cling,
And cold woods under clouds of dreary gray
Darken about a little pond and bring
A chill and early close to setting day.
To far, dim pines has fled the silent jay;
About the shores of mud, left hard and dry
By months of drought, no autumn hylas cry;
The veery and the woodcock now are gone,
Far southward through October's moonlit sky,
And fly above the mighty Amazon.

Would I might mount on shiny metal wing,
When sunrise lights Para, and soar away
Westard — Earth's mightiest river billowing
With tawny waters that divide and play
Among unnumbered islands — and survey
Those teeming, boundless woods that seem to lie
Savage and dense as when the white man's eye
First saw them from the tossing galleon,
And look down on the vulture circling high
And fly above the mighty Amazon.

And sometimes down over tree-tops blossoming —
Their scented flowers and brilliant orchids gay,
While ruddy howlers make the forest ring, —
Over palms and wild bananas, to a bay
The plane would glide, where waterlilies sway
And bright macaws and scarlet ibis fly,
To find a high perched river town near by.
Then it would rise and westward on and on
Would sail, though rains and lightning terrify,
And fly above the mighty Amazon;

Till I could see those flowers of richest dye
On Andean slopes that with the rainbow vie
And the deep gorge where foams the Marañon.
— And so I dream, as winter night draws nigh,
And fly above the mighty Amazon.

SESTINAS

NOSTALGIA

PASTORAL

NOSTALGIA

Translation from the German of Friedrich Rückert

J. M. Friedrich Rückert was born in Bavaria and spent most of his life in pleasant little towns of that province. At school he showed remarkable ease in foreign languages, and in time he became familiar with as many as thirty. In early manhood and later he displayed a similar skill in the use of lyrical forms, not only those employed by German poets but also a great number from the poetry of other nations.

Rückert attracted attention first by his *Sonnets in Harness* written in opposition to Napoleon (1814). Three years later he visited Italy and spent a year traveling through the country and studying Italian literature and art. Soon after, he published two volumes of poetry in the Italian manner. In the year 1821 his marriage with Luise Wiethaus-Fischer inspired his most famous poetical work, *Springtime of Love*. The estate of her family at Neuses near Coburg was his favorite residence during the rest of his life.

Meanwhile Rückert took great interest in the peoples of Asia. In the year 1826 he became professor of oriental languages at the University of Erlangen. Fifteen years later Frederick William Fourth of Prussia persuaded him to continue this work at the University of Berlin and also made him a councillor of state. But Rückert preferred a life of poetry and idyllic calm. In the year 1848 he retired to Neuses and spent there the remaining eighteen years of his life. Much of his later poetry was original treatment of oriental subjects or translation of Arabic, Persian, and Hindu literature, including masterpieces of many kinds. In this field his most celebrated work was his *Wisdom of the Brahmins*. He seems to

have had rare skill in presenting both the spirit and the style of great oriental poetry.

Rückert's sestina, which I have called *Nostalgia*, was written during his years at Erlangen and probably near the beginning of that period. It may have been suggested by a longing to rejoin his wife at their loved country home.

NOSTALGIA

Translation from the German of Friedrich Rückert

When piercing wind whirls the fine flakes of snow
And footfalls sound along ways hard with frost
Down to a river mirror-smooth with ice,
Then it is good to leave the winter storm
And, undisturbed within the kindly heat
Of my own hearth, to sit with her at home.

O that even now I might be there at home,
Near her whose soft brow vies with the pure snow,
Whose sunny eyes can wake with their mild heat
Sparkles of joy even in the dull, gray frost.
How she would banish all my inner storm,
Would turn to dew my bosom's weight of ice!

Warm suns of spring must thaw the winter's ice,
Spring airs, with fragrance of their southland home,
Must drive far towards the north the loud, white storm;
Before I may return to kiss that snow
Of her light hand, which came not with the frost
And never fades at height of summer's heat.

Yearning within me burns like summer heat,
Consumes my heart, which wastes like softened ice, —
Even in the coldest night of winter's frost.
Headlong my thoughts rush to their distant home,
To her I love, confused as flakes of snow
Driven pell mell before the roaring storm.

O that some gust might waft me in the storm
To her and quench my longing's fiery heat!
That I might settle as a flake of snow
Or rest a shining, slender point of ice
Upon that peaceful roof above her home.
There I should never feel the winter's frost.

Among sweet lilacs, who remembers frost;
Under the sun of love, who fears a storm;
Who thinks of hardship there, where she is at home?
And even the thought of her inspires life's heat,
Despite those intervening fields of ice
And those dividing mountains cold with snow.

Snow of the apple blossoms hides bleak frost,
Ice leaves fair streams, spring birds sing in the storm,
In genial heat I seem with you at home.

PASTORAL

Translation from the French of Ferdinand,
Comte de Grammont

The sestina which I have called *Pastoral* shows a fondness of Grammont for quiet natural scenery and for great poetry of older times. While enjoying idyllic landscape, Grammont associated it with the *Eclogues* of Vergil. For men of his own day these delightful poems had been an essential part of their schooling. The nature of Vergil's work and many salient verses were familiar to all people of education. Different interests of the twentieth century have caused the *Eclogues* to disappear from the schools and to be known only by a fortunate few. The modern reader may need some account of their part in the sestina of Grammont.

The first writer of pastoral poetry, Theocritus, often described the actual life of Greek shepherds, especially their habit of withdrawing in the noonday heat to the shade of trees or caves and entertaining themselves with conversation and with songs accompanied by reed pipes. But in at least one famous poem Theocritus wrote the pastoral as allegory. He told about himself and his friends under a transparent disguise of shepherd names and rustic life. Vergil brought allegory of this kind into a number of his eclogues. Sometimes he used the actual names of his friends. And in this part of his work Grammont took particular interest.

Vergil described himself in his *First Eclogue* as a shepherd named Tityrus piping under a beech tree. He alluded to a seizure of his land and that of his neighbors by the political leaders, Octavius and Antony, and to the restoration of his own land by Octavius, afterward the emperor Augustus. Vergil referred to some neighbor

as the shepherd Meliboeus, who marvelled that Tityrus was fortunate enough to enjoy his former quiet happiness; and he showed Tityrus replying that, as it always would seem to him, a god had made possible his ease. Grammont alluded to the *First Eclogue* soon after the beginning of his poem and again towards the end.

In the *Tenth Eclogue* Vergil told the sorrow of his friend, the poet Gallus after his loved Lycoris had deserted him for another man. Vergil spoke of Gallus as trying to find consolation by departing to Arcadia and learning to compose pastoral songs. But nothing availed against Love. This poem Grammont recalled in his second stanza. Vergil had spoken of his own lament as destined to be read by Lycoris. By a confusion of memory Grammont declared that she heard the pastoral songs of Gallus.

Vergil's *Fifth Eclogue* described the shepherds Menalcas and Mopsus entering a cave under a wild vine and singing in turn. Mopsus, repeating lines which he had carved on a beech tree, lamented the untimely death of the shepherd Daphnis. Menalcas identified Daphnis with Julius Caesar and told of his becoming one of the heavenly gods. This poem Grammont recalled in his third stanza.

In Vergil's *Sixth Eclogue* the wood god Silenus told in song about the creation of the world and went on to tell of famous mythical events. Vergil noted the delight which the song gave to fauns, wild animals, and even oak trees. While recalling this eclogue, Grammont added further detail about the attentive audience. Vergil had likened Silenus to Apollo and Orpheus, and so Grammont imagined the wood god as laying aside his shepherd pipes and accompanying himself with a lyre.

Vergil's *Fourth Eclogue* predicted the birth of a child,

probably a son of the consul Pollio, and associated with it the coming of new Golden Age. The poet bade the woods become worthy of a consul and told of the miracles which he foresaw, among them fruits ripening without cultivation in every land, lambs growing fleeces of scarlet, and rams in the meadows bearing now purple and now saffron wool. Men of later times often found in Vergil's poem some hidden meaning, usually a prediction of the coming of Christ. Grammont thought of this eclogue as indicating the joy which one may find in quiet nature associated with the wonderful poetry of Vergil.

PASTORAL

Translation from the French of Ferdinand,
Comte de Grammont

Vergil, how often in some beech tree's shade,
Sitting at noon while sheep fed on the leas,
Dear Master, with your witchery I have played.
Nature was there, her peaceful beauty made
Me glad. And, like sweet pipes borne on the breeze,
Your pastoral song charmed all my summer ease.

"O Meliboeus, a god gave me such ease,"
Sings Tityrus within a beech's shade.
Gallus with borrowed pipe, charming the breeze,
Teaches the shepherds on Arcadian leas
Verses that Lycoris heard when they were made;
"Love conquers all, Love has the master played."

Menalcas with his friend, both masters, played
Their reeds in a green cave, taking their ease.
"Daphnis has died," they sang, "but he is made
Immortal. Carved in a beech of spreading shade,
His praise shall live, though sheep upon the leas
Should hear no more sweet piping in the breeze!"

Silenus with the lyre delights the breeze.
Flower crowned, his pipes laid by, the old master played,
Drawing the enchanted shepherds from the leas
Even Pan and Faunus deigned to lie at ease,
The wild boar listened, oaks inclined their shade,
To hear him sing how first the world was made.

Then Pollio's glory sounds. The woods are made
Fit for his triumph, stilled are pipe and breeze,
Prophetic airs have stirred the beechen shade.
Preludes of a new lord and age are played
That promise all the earth a golden ease,
Hesperian fruit, and purple rams on leas.

Mysterious song! These fruits, these magic leas
In a true sense already have been made.
The fields and woods can give that wondrous ease.
Although our forest hears no piping in the breeze,
Yet Tityrus his olden tunes has played,
His magic names enchant the beech tree's shade.

For shade a beech and sheep white on the leas,
While fancy played, I seemed life's master made.
A breeze from dreamland charmed my noontide ease.

ALONG THE STREAM

ALONG THE STREAM

Again I tread your bank, dear woodland stream!
Under the maple shade your currents run,
Rippling the cress, while water striders dream.
Your reaches open to May's brilliant sun
Shine with green, massed forget-me-nots, that teem
From shore to shore and have not yet begun

Their bloom. Gold threads of dodder have begun
To shimmer on tall weeds bending near the stream;
Blue dragonflies flit by; warm breezes run
Through treetops; and, where solemn pine trees dream,
A wood thrush, trilling, hidden from the sun,
Enchants the shores, where summer seems to teem.

I need no river where great memories teem,
In older lands where history has begun:
Avon, whose willows grow aslant the stream;
The winding Marne; the Rhine, whose waters run
Past vine clad hills; the Nile of poets' dream;
Nor holy Jordan, rolling toward the sun;

No vaster flood, lit by our western sun:
St. Lawrence and his awesome falls, that teem
With mist; the Mississippi, that begun
In northern lakes; Columbia's mountain stream;
Nor Parana, whose maze of waters run
By a thousand isles, where tropic orchards dream.

Yes, by this nameless water I would dream,
Which I have known soft azure in the sun,
When the warm woods with scented clethra teem;
Or pied with leaves, when autumn has begun;
Or sunk between white walls of snow, a stream
That under mottled ice would darkly run.

With childhood's joy I saw these waters run,
Now with gray hairs I come and gladly dream
Of kin and friends, who walked here in the sun.
How many I'll see no more, when blue flowers teem,
Yet hope to meet, with fairer life begun,
In fadeless woods along a heavenward stream.

Beside my homeland stream, while life shall run,
I love to walk — and dream beneath the sun.
Its memories teem, till slumber has begun.

LAMENTATION

LAMENTATION

Translation from the Spanish of Lope de Vega
(1562-1635)

Lope Felix de Vega Carpio was the most rapid and prolific author who ever won lasting fame. Working chiefly in the field of drama, he wrote eighteen hundred plays and four hundred shorter pieces. Often, he tells us, he would receive a request for a play and twenty-four hours later would have the work finished and in rehearsal on the stage. Lope's plays made the drama an important form of Spanish literature and at their best had permanent merit. Lope succeeded also in a number of his many lyric poems. And he wrote both narrative poetry and romances in prose, of which the most successful is a novel in dialogue called *Dorothea*. On the whole he was national in spirit and treated Spanish themes in a way that could be enjoyed by all classes of his countrymen.

But he felt the influence of Italian literature, which was winning admiration in every leading country of Europe. In the year 1598 he followed the prevailing fashion and wrote a pastoral romance called *Arcadia*, which had a story in prose about the love affairs and misadventures of shepherds, interspersed with lyrics in the Italian manner. Among them was a double sestina, which I have called *Lamentation*, the most ambitious poem in the form of a sestina that ever was written in Spanish. The subject was lament of a lover separated from his lady, a theme treated in sestinas by Spenser, Sidney, Opitz, and other poets of the Renaissance and again long after by Rückert. Lope told of the shepherd Amphrysius, who was exiled to Mt. Lycaeus, a high peak of Arcadia, and of his withdrawing to a thicket at

noon, when the shadows were short, and bewailing his absence from his loved Belisarda.

Petrarch, in his double sestina mourning the death of Laura, had set an example of unrestrained grief and had contrasted former joy with present sorrow. Lope followed him and dwelt on an idea, made famous by Dante and Tennyson.

That a sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things.

Chaucer, in the words of the aging wife of Bath, had expressed the opposite idea:

When that it remembreth me
Upon my youth and on my jollity,
It tickleth me about mine herte rote,
Unto this day it doth mine herte bote,
That I have had my world as in my time!

Lope's hero, like Rückert, declared that his lady's fair eyes could dispel his grief and that her presence would make him happy anywhere. But he lacked the comforting assurance enjoyed by Rückert that in time he should return to her.

LAMENTATION

Translation from the Spanish of Lope de Vega

Bitter hours of what still might be sweet days —
For love and fortune, joined with kindly heaven,
Once made the days delightful to my soul —
What can you bring but solitude of sorrow?
Why heighten it with such clear memories
Of years near her that brought a life of joy?

Our times of most prosperity and joy,
Their bright procession of smooth gliding days,
What do they leave with us but memories?
Nothing endures beneath the spreading heaven;
In all I find new memories of sorrow,
Pain for the body, confusion for the soul.

How can it be that pride lifts up the soul,
Even on those heights of life that bring most joy,
If we but think of their descent to sorrow,
The brevity of our few brilliant days,
The sequel of regrets and memories,
And life's long exile from our home in heaven?

Immense Intelligence that lives in heaven,
Mover of all, Creator of the soul,
Chaos returns in my sad memories.
In their wild clash they feel a cruel joy,
Soon will their growing discord fill my days
With one rude harmony of blended sorrow.

I pass the year discoursing with my sorrow
Under the storm clouds of unfriendly heaven,
That seem to make a night of fairest days.
Blind is the intelligence, light of the soul,
For in her essence things that should bring joy
Recall my loss and wake sad memories.

O absence, futile mother of memories,
Why do you bid our frail thoughts in their sorrow
Cling to lost good that we possessed in joy?
It is the will of all disposing heaven
That life and sense, the heart, and even the soul
Lie subject to caprice of our brief days.

Youth is a flower, a shadow are our days,
A fading smoke in future memories.
O life, till mortal end prison of the soul,
Why give so much of your few hours to sorrow?
Far better it would seem, with change of heaven,
To turn my present fortune into joy.

Illumine, sun divine, with rays of joy,
Your golden hairs, the length of my sad days,
Let rainbows fade and clear dawn redden heaven.
Such power is not allowed to memories
(As tear dimmed eyes may fancy in my sorrow)
That seas of gloom should overwhelm the shipwrecked soul.

Yet, hearer of these complaints and of my soul
Fair Master, how shall I ever name with joy
A cruel absence and its hours of sorrow,
Which make up years with leaden footed days?
If you but keep in mind my memories,
I need not pray for more from pitying heaven!

With her, beneath hot Ethiopia's heaven
Or always in cold Scythian snow, my soul
At ease would have no more sad memories.
Her beauty, an eternal spring of joy,
Would fill the black robed nights and shining days
With jubilation never touched by sorrow.

Such vain desires and thoughts, which end in sorrow, —
Unless I have the aid of favoring heaven —
Foreshadow the brief limit of my days.
Ah heavenly maid long absent, hope of my soul,
How your fair, radiant eyes, inspiring joy,
Would brighten my dark thoughts and memories.

O cruel scene, in which my memories
And keen imagination heighten sorrow
By hourly contrast with lost times of joy —
In other fields beneath another heaven!
They picture love, the true life of the soul,
Through all the space of vainly lingering days.

Such days of ever growing memories
Will bow even more a soul now fraught with sorrow
But leave us hope of lasting joy in heaven.

VILLANELLES

HISTORY OF THE VILLANELLE

HISTORY OF THE VILLANELLE

The term villanelle was used at first rather vaguely in Spain and in France to suggest any kind of lyrical poem with a refrain which the country folk sang to accompany their dances. Desportes and other French poets of the sixteenth century used the term for their literary work in imitation of such poems. Jean Passerat was the author of more than one lyric of this kind. But in the year 1597 Passerat wrote a poem called *My Turtle Dove*, which had a definite form and became the model for later writers of the villanelle.

This villanelle was an elegy, simple and naïve in tone. Passerat wrote it in trochaic lines of four feet. He used only two rhyming sounds, which we may call a and b. His poem had six stanzas. Five of these had three lines each, rhyming in the order aba. The opening stanza was an introduction to the poem. Its first and third lines became two refrains and reappeared alternately at the ends of the next four stanzas. The first refrain occurred at the end of stanzas two and four; the second refrain, at the end of stanzas three and five. The sixth and last stanza of the poem had four lines, rhyming in the order abaa. It ended with the two refrains, which came one after the other and made a brief summary of the poem.

During more than two hundred years after the time of Passerat, French writers about versification continued to describe the villanelle in accord with the pattern of his *Turtle Dove*. But no poet tried to use the form. About the middle of the nineteenth century Théodore de Banville revived the villanelle, with a difference. He wrote in a tone of satirical humor, and he increased the length of the poem. In his first villanelle he wrote seven stanzas before adding the final quatrain. That gave him eight

stanzas in all. In his second villanelle he made the total length twelve stanzas.

A few French poets of the later nineteenth century wrote villanelles. Most of their work was serious. Joseph Boulmier revived both the spirit and the form of Passerat. His villanelles were simple and naïve, and he wrote always in six stanzas. A greater number, he said, would impair the light, dainty effect which he regarded as essential. His work included a villanelle describing his own conception of the form. Also in the manner of Passerat was Philoxène Boyer's villanelle called *La Marquise Aurore*.

Leconte de Lisle made a number of innovations. He wrote his two villanelles in iambic feet. The first had only four stanzas. The second in its ending departed much from the usual form. The last stanza had three lines — a couplet with a new rhyming sound (cc) and then the first refrain. Maurice Rollinat kept nearer the traditional form, but he wrote usually in a tone of sardonic humor, and he always extended his villanelles to remarkable length. The shortest of them numbered ten stanzas, the other five varied between fourteen and twenty. In his hands the villanelle became an exhibition of dazzling skill.

In the year 1874 Edmund Gosse introduced the villanelle into English poetry. Andrew Lang, W. E. Henley, and Austin Dobson followed soon after. And, although Robert Louis Stevenson disapproved of the form, still other poets followed their example. Henley found the villanelle especially congenial and wrote a number of poems of this kind, one of them describing the villanelle. English authors were impressed by the work of Boulmier. They wrote in a simple and serious manner and

usually in six stanzas. Henley and Dobson occasionally introduced a gentle humor.

John Payne and a few other English poets used eight stanzas. Graham R. Tomson made the innovation of writing a villanelle in seven. Before the final quatrain, he introduced an extra stanza of three lines ending with the first refrain. And Tomson and Payne each extended a villanelle of this kind to a total of nine stanzas.

English poets wrote not only the four foot trochaic lines usual in French villanelles but also other kinds of verse, especially lines of four iambic feet.

At the close of the nineteenth century and later, a number of American authors used the villanelle. Prominent among them were Clinton Scollard and Edward Arlington Robinson. They seemed to follow conservatively the example of the English. But Brookes More wrote what he called a double villanelle, extending to a length of twelve stanzas.

MY TURTLE DOVE

MY TURTLE DOVE

Translation from the French of Jean Passerat
(1534-1602)

Jean Passerat spent most of his life in Paris, as a student and teacher of the classics. He published editions of the Roman lyric poets Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius, and he himself wrote a volume of elegant Latin verse. During the civil wars of the time, he sided with Henry of Navarre and was one of the authors of the famous political work called *Satire Menipée*. This and his other satirical writing contributed much toward making Henry king of France. But Passerat is remembered chiefly for his graceful French lyrics.

One of them is the villanelle *My Turtle Dove*, in which a lover mourns the death of his lady. Use of the word turtle dove, or turtle, as an affectionate name for a young woman seems to have been frequent at the close of the sixteenth century. Undoubtedly it was encouraged by the idea, mentioned by Chaucer in his *Parliament of Fowls* and by Shakespeare in *A Winter's Tale*, that turtle doves mate for life and are remarkable for their devotion.

MY TURTLE DOVE

Translation from the French of Jean Passerat

I have lost my turtle dove,
Yet I seem to hear her call.
I would follow her above.

Do you mourn your lady love?
Just so cruel is my gall,
I have lost my turtle dove.

You and she were hand in glove,
Even so were we in all.
I would follow her above.

You must ever think thereof,
Such my grief continual.
I have lost my turtle dove.

Now, without my pretty love,
Beauty fades from wood and hall.
I would follow her above.

Death, whose net most men would shove,
Take me — may it quickly fall!
I have lost my turtle dove,
I would follow her above.

IN THE SPRINGTIME

IN THE SPRINGTIME

Translation from the French of Joseph Boulmier
(1821-1881)

Joseph Boulmier's native province was Burgundy. He appears to have spent his mature years in Paris, as a poor and solitary scholar. Attracted by the older French poetry, he wrote some lyrics using both the poetical forms and the language of the fifteenth century. But his chief fondness was for the villanelle.

In the year 1878 he published a work entitled *Villanelles*, which included first a brief prose account of the form and then forty of these poems — the largest number ever written by a single author. Boulmier admitted in his last villanelle that he could not expect popularity and was writing merely for his own satisfaction. His careful study and delicate art have made him an authority on the subject of the villanelle.

IN THE SPRINGTIME

Translation from the French of Joseph Boulmier

She was only just fifteen,
I but eighteen then, at most.
Memory, why are you so keen?

Day by day, when fields were green,
We would rove, in talk engrossed.
She was only just fifteen.

Breathless often, we chased the sheen
Of the butterflies' gay host.
Memory, why are you so keen?

One day under an oak serene
We confessed our hearts' shy boast.
She was only just fifteen.

She became a castle's queen,
I lived on a far off coast.
Memory, why are you so keen?

Many years now intervene,
All regret is vain and lost.
She was only just fifteen.
Memory, why are you so keen?

ON THE HEATHER

ON THE HEATHER*

(1946)

When we picnicked on the heather,
Golden bracken shone the while
In the mild September weather.

And a shepherd girl in leather
Rode by with a friendly smile.
When we picnicked on the heather,

Not a breeze to lift a feather
Stirred the moors for mile on mile
In the mild September weather.

But dark foes were met together,
Plotting unguessed force and guile,
When we picnicked on the heather.

And for long we doubted whether
We could save the whole fair isle,
In the mild September weather.

Yet, as fancy slips life's tether,
How we love that carefree style,
When we picnicked on the heather
In the mild September weather!

*This poem has been set to music by David Strand
of West Coast Music Service, Kingston, Washington.

FANCY AND FACT

FANCY AND FACT

Translation from the French of Joseph Boulmier

In the poems *Fancy* and *Fact* Boulmier undertook the difficult task of writing two villanelles, contrasting different aspects of a single theme, and of using the same rhyming sounds in both.

The poem *Fact* mentioned the author's pet cats, which inspired other villanelles of his work. One of these pets, he tells us, was the young, frivolous Coquette, with brilliant eyes and white fur. She used to divert him in times of despondency. The other was the elderly Gaspard. Boulmier condoled with him, when Coquette used to depart and remain away until late at night, and afterwards the poet deplored his death as the loss of a real friend.

FANCY

Translation from the French of Joseph Boulmier

Were I a swallow, flashing blue,
I would never wander far.
To my nest I would be true.

Only one fair mate I'd woo —
Love that death alone could mar,
Were I a swallow, flashing blue.

In our home no strife would brew,
No dispute nor hateful jar.
To my nest I would be true.

When our young to fledgelings grew,
I would cheer their flights bizarre,
Were I a swallow, flashing blue.

Nestling close, at fall of dew,
We would brave the winter star.
To my nest I would be true.

Charmed by love forever new,
Would I flit to Zanzibar?
Were I a swallow, flashing blue,
To my nest I would be true.

FACT

Translation from the French of Joseph Boulmier

I'm no swallow, flashing blue.
In a garret — poor owl bizarre,
To my nest I must be true.

I'm alone. I could not woo
Even a hag to come and char.
I'm no swallow, flashing blue.

Melancholy in somber hue
Shares my home — without a jar.
To my nest I must be true.

Two lean cats with plaintive mew —
All my family, there they are!
I'm no swallow, flashing blue.

By an empty grate I rue
Nights beneath the winter star.
To my nest I must be true.

Old and poor, what could I do.
Could I flit — to Zanzibar?
I'm no swallow, flashing blue.
To my nest I must be true!

NIGHT AT THE EQUATOR

NIGHT AT THE EQUATOR

Translation from the French of Leconte de Lisle
(1818-1894)

Leconte de Lisle was born on the island of Réunion, which lies in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar. In order to attend college he sailed, round the Cape of Good Hope, to France. He made that country his permanent home but returned on at least one occasion to his native island.

The villanelle *Night at the Equator* may recall an experience during his voyages along the west coast of Africa. Leconte de Lisle included the lyric in his volume called *Tragic Poems*, published in the year 1884. As a description of night and peace on the quiet deep, it offers a contrast with Goethe's *Becalmed*, a word picture of daytime and terror during stillness at sea. In form Leconte de Lisle's poem is remarkable as the shortest of all villanelles.

NIGHT AT THE EQUATOR

Translation from the French of Leconte de Lisle

All sense of time and space and number
Has vanished from this ebon sky
Into the ocean deep in slumber.

Pall of silence and densest umber,
Night hides entirely from the eye
All sense of time and space and number.

Like some heavy and idle lumber,
The mind seems fallen with a sigh
Into the ocean deep in slumber.

This and all else which might encumber —
Memory, fancy, and feeling — fly,
All sense of time and space and number,
Into the ocean deep in slumber.

GRASS

GRASS*

Dear, gentle grass beneath my feet,
Though autumn air is keen today,
You rise again — fresh, green, and sweet.

When summer parches you with heat,
You only shrink down toward the clay,
Dear, gentle grass beneath my feet.

From wintry winds you may retreat,
Yet, when the milder thaw holds sway,
You rise again — fresh, green, and sweet.

Though countless times fierce mowers eat
Your hopeful leaves and bloom away,
Dear, gentle grass beneath my feet;

Even if white tennis champions meet
And tread you through their hours of play,
You rise again — fresh, green, and sweet!

As Heavenly Love still comes to greet
Us, though we always say it nay;
Dear, gentle grass beneath my feet,
You rise again — fresh, green, and sweet.

*This poem has been set to music by David Strand
of West Coast Music Service, Kingston, Washington.



THE BELL

THE BELL*

This villanelle reverses the usual order of refrains. The second refrain occurs at the end of stanzas two and four, and the first follows at the end of stanzas three and five. In the traditional villanelle the opening stanza serves as introduction. With the reversed order it seemed well to have two stanzas of introduction and only three stanzas in the main part of the poem.

**The Bell* has been set to music by David Strand of West Coast Music Service, Kingston, Washington.



San Charles

*Over fields a clear church bell
Wafts a sweet and solemn spell.*

THE BELL

Over fields a clear church bell
At the passing of the hour
Wafts a sweet and solemn spell;

Heard in calm, when all is well,
Floating from its elm tree bower,
Wafts a sweet and solemn spell.

When no storms nor loud wind swell,
Sounds to us from its white tower
Over fields a clear church bell.

When no stress nor toils impel,
On our souls its gentle power
Wafts a sweet and solemn spell.

When no war born sirens yell,
Comes, as mild as scent of flower,
Over fields a clear church bell.

Often may such quiet dwell
In our lives and blessing shower.
Over fields a clear church bell
Wafts a sweet and solemn spell.

THE PURPLE SANDPIPER

THE PURPLE SANDPIPER

In a most interesting pamphlet devoted to birds visiting the South Shore of Massachusetts, the eminent naturalist, Dr. John B. May, has described the life of a purple sandpiper. His account suggested the following villanelle

THE PURPLE SANDPIPER

On a seagirt isle all day
Flits a bird with white barred wing,
Always in the white, chill spray;

Though towards land the ice shines gray,
Though high surf comes buffeting
On a seagirt isle all day.

Glad in sunshine's wintry ray,
Careless what the storm clouds bring,
Always in the white, chill spray,

As the wave retreats away,
Out he runs where brown weeds cling,
On a seagirt isle all day.

Where the freezing tidepools sway,
He will dash in, revelling,
Always in the white, chill spray.

Or he hunts, while storm winds play,
Leewards where the dark weeds swing
On a seagirt isle all day,

Till with night he leaves the fray,
Under a ledge where north winds sing,
Always in the white, chill spray.

Hardy bird! You never stray
South for milder wintering
On a seagirt isle all day.

But you fly the warmth of May
Northwards — to a Greenland spring
On a seagirt isle all day,
Always in the white, chill spray.

A VILLANELLE OF THE DEVIL

A VILLANELLE OF THE DEVIL

Translation from the French of Maurice Rollinat
(1846-1903)

Maurice Rollinat served as a minor official in Paris until, when he was about forty, ill health caused his retirement to the country. He was chiefly a man of letters. In literary societies of his time he became famous for recitation of his poems, many of which were dedicated individually to men and women of the day. For his own work and for poems of Baudelaire and others he often composed musical settings, and he sang them to small groups of his personal friends.

In the year 1883 Rollinat published his best known volume, called *Neuroses*. Influence of Baudelaire and Poe appeared in his fondness for morbid themes. The example of Théodore de Banville suggested his use of difficult poetical forms which had been current in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Among the most remarkable poems of Rollinat's volume was his *Villanelle of the Devil*, which he dedicated to Banville. It extended to eighteen stanzas, three times the traditional length of a villanelle. Rollinat introduced an innovation in the technique. Previous writers of the villanelle made each stanza correspond to a division of the subject and closed it with a period. Rollinat often allowed the thought to run over from one stanza to the next. In a poem of such length it gave a desirable sense of flexibility and variety.

A VILLANELLE OF THE DEVIL

Translation from the French of Maurice Rollinat

Hell just burns and burns and burns.
Cynic with the blighting sneer,
Satan roams and prowls by turns,

Spies, advances, then adjourns,
Zig zag, as the lightnings veer.
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

Foam that floats by wading hems,
Worm that gnaws on funeral bier,
Satan roams and prowls by turns.

Flower or dragonfly he turns,
Hag or snake he may appear.
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

Then, with waxed mustache, he learns
Perfumed charm of vetyver.
Satan roams and prowls by turns,

Lord or fellow of drunken kerns,
School boy or the pedant sere.
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

Now in boor's, now monk's concerns,
In the mines or by the weir,
Satan roams and prowls by turns,

Whereso'er man lives and churns.
Summer and winter, every year,
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

Through the ships to their high sterns.
On the trains, when nights are drear,
Satan roams and prowls by turns,

Friend of cheating lottery urns
And statistics that are queer.
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

Though we sleep, he still discerns
Every sin with vision clear.
Satan roams and prowls by turns.

Now he offers, treats, secerns;
Now is sugary, now austere.
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

To each soul where he sojourns
He confides a secret smear.
Satan roams and prowls by turns.

He will poison what virtue earns,
Cast a doubt on men sincere.
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

Callously he mocks and spurns
Ruined souls who shrink in fear.
Satan roams and prowls by turns.

Shun his flattering, sly returns;
Pray, if ever he says "My dear!"
Hell just burns and burns and burns.

For all souls, all flesh he yearns —
Atheist or priest severe.
Satan roams and prowls by turns.

Midnight sounds. — Behind my ferns
Do I see his fiendish leer?
Hell just burns and burns and burns.
Satan roams and prowls by turns.

NARRATIVE

SIR PELLENORE

SIR PELLENORE

In fable or romance of Arthur
Begirt with British and Armoric knights.
Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Of faery damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
Paradise Regained

The theme of the following tale appeared first in Irish literature, beginning soon after the year one thousand A. D. It interested the Norsemen and occurred briefly in a number of their sagas. In the twelfth century the idea attracted poets of France, England, and Germany. It continued to be popular throughout the medieval period and was treated in romances of considerable length. Although originally the theme was independent, medieval authors often associated it with King Arthur and his knights. And Chaucer related it to Arthur in his *Wife of Bath's Tale*, the only version of the story which is read frequently today. After Chaucer's time the idea was treated much less often and by most readers was forgotten. But it appeared in the fifteenth century *Ballad of King Henry* and, as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, in Heber's *Masque of Gwendolyn*. An interesting and detailed history of the subject will be found in Professor G. H. Maynadier's work entitled *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and more briefly in his *Arthur of the English Poets*. While reviving this favorite medieval story, I have told it in my own way but have retained nearly all the incidents noted by tradition.

For the poetical medium I have used the stanza in-

vented and made famous by Spenser in his *Faerie Queene*. Although this form of verse is known chiefly from the work of its great inventor, it has attracted many later poets and has had a distinguished history. Through almost the entire length of the eighteenth century it was used by a number of English authors. The most successful were Thomson in *The Castle of Indolence* and Shenstone in *The Schoolmistress*. In the early part of the nineteenth century the Spenserian stanza appeared in the work of most leading writers of the day, beginning with Crabbe in *The Birth of Flattery* and ending with Wiffen in his translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Eighteenth century poets were careful, both in manner and in language, to give their work an old-time effect. Some nineteenth century authors followed their example, among them Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*. But Scott in the preludes to *The Lady of the Lake* used Spenserian stanzas for poetry which was modern in subject and style. Byron followed in *Childe Harold* and was followed in turn by most other poets of the time. Nearly always the Spenserian stanza has been used for serious themes. But Spenser occasionally introduced humor into *The Faerie Queene*. Keats chose a humorous theme for his *Cap and Bells*, and Hood followed his example in *The Irish Schoolmaster*.

Since the year 1830 very few authors have used the Spenserian stanza. Among them the most prominent was Tennyson, in a passage of *The Lotos Eaters*. And, during more than a hundred years, no one has chosen the Spenserian stanza for a work of any length.

SIR PELLENORE

Sir Pellenore, a young and blue eyed knight
Of Arthur's court, rode into an upland glade
With his two friends, Sir Ambrose at his right,
Sir Bors upon the left. A while they stayed
Their horses and with huntsmen's eyes surveyed
The forest landscape, spreading north and west
To where blue Cambrian mountains seemed to fade
In the soft autumn sky, to note where best
They might seek browsing deer or boar in noontide rest.

Under the trees some keepers cheered dark hounds,
That quested here and there for trace of game.
Sometimes they waked an echo with glad sounds
Of hunting horns, to rouse the strayed or tame.
'Twas late October, and like smoky flame
The lindens moved, as autumn winds would fling
Their wasting leaves afar. Yet these winds came
Blest with St. Martin's Summer and would bring
Even in the year's decay a hint of gladsome spring.

Sir Ambrose, plump and merry, beamed with joy.
Marking a vale where aspen still was green,
He said, "All morning game's been scarce and coy,
But luck can change. Down there perhaps the dean
Of British stags is browsing yet unseen!"
Sir Bors, more grave with dark and brooding eyes,
Shared in the other's joy, although less keen.
"The day is good and still may hold a prize,"
He said, "Among the birches on that sunlit rise."

But Pellenore was sad. "O for some quarry
To take us through the wood in headlong chase!"
He cried. "Then I could soon forget the sorry
Thoughts that have followed even to this place.
I should not see her fair, seductive face,
Which I had hoped would be my guiding star,
Nor that bold Frankish emissary's grace
In flattery, which came between to mar.
I could forget a while my lost, my false Etarre."

"We'll find you game," Sir Ambrose answered him,
"To take your thought and make you ride your best.
Come, come, sir knight, a lady's fickle whim
Is not enough to ruin all life's zest.
The king smiles on you, and in your first quest
You have won honor. All men hold you well.
And, though Love mocked you with one bitter jest,
Yet there are other ladies. Who can tell
How soon a worthier maid will cast a happier spell?"

Sir Pellenore could smile and give him thanks.
But he had been too constant in his love
To cast it lightly off at fortune's pranks —
To rise, content with honor and friends, above
His loss or change his lady like a glove.
He had longed to be for life her faithful knight
And find his lady true as turtle dove.
Such things he could not tell, and so forthright
He spurred on toward the hounds, which now were lost to
sight.

Sir Ambrose would have followed, but Sir Bors
Detained him and drew near. "What a gilded snake
That lady was," he said, "without remorse
To dally at home and for a flatterer break
Her vow to one in peril for her sake!
Would I could hunt down that base Frankish knight
And on his Gallic shore could overtake
Him with his paramour, then in her sight
Make the mean craven face my sword in mortal fight!"

"That could bring foreign war, and for what cause
A worthless kite that we do well to lose.
The Frank may have her, he'll win scant applause,"
Sir Ambrose answered. "Let us rather choose
The method that our king preferred to use —
To give our friend his former joy in sport,
In trophies won by manly toil and bruise,
And so with memories of a happier sort
To bring him home, refreshed for services at court."

"That was our king's command, and it is wise,"
Sir Bors agreed. "But, lest we ride too near
Those mountains, we should warn him of surprise.
The Cambrians, raiding sheep and swine herds here,
Wily and fierce, may suddenly appear
With showers of darts and stones from woodland shade;
While we, without our mail and battle gear,
Are caught — out in an open, sunlit glade,
And lack of a troop of bowmen to give timely aid."

“It is unlikely. At the ford of Usk
Sir Pellenore fell on their wild array,
And few escaped — by favor of the dusk.
He guessed their temper, pushed through the kerns
straightway,
Encountered their young chief in desperate fray,
And pierced his heart. The tribesmen at the sight,
Crying ‘Ill omen’, scattered in dismay.
They will not soon recover their lost might
Nor overcome the chill of superstitious fright!”

Just then among blue pines well ahead
A loud and eager cry broke from the hounds,
And some one marked an antlered stag, that fled,
Clearing the fallen trees with light, long bounds.
All spurred their horses toward the welcome sounds —
With shout and horn. The ravens flew on high,
Wild ducks rose, quacking, from the marshy grounds,
While through the woods the dogs ran in full cry
And autumn hills resounded as the hunt went by.

Long was the chase, it tried both man and horse.
For strong and wary was that fleeing stag,
Swift in his flight and cunning in resource —
To breast the ridge where hound and horseman flag,
To make his way across the treacherous quag,
And swim the deep, dark flowing woodland stream;
Till, scattered far, the hunt began to lag,
The sun, declining, shone with level beam,
And close, above the trees, the mountains seemed to
gleam.

Sir Pellenore rode near at the hounds' first cry,
And, following always close behind the dogs,
He led the eager hunt through wet and dry,
Plunging through thickets, jumping rocks and logs,
Skirting in haste around the grassy bogs,
Or, where the panting quarry thought to hide,
Plashing among tall reeds and leaping frogs,
And, when the hunt strayed through the countryside,
Calling with voice and horn their way to run and ride.

And, as the other huntsmen lagged behind,
He felt a keener impulse to pursue,
To give the deer no rest but ever find
A way to keep the fleeing game in view;
For so the quarry could no more renew
His waning strength, nor try some cunning wile,
And might be brought to bay ere night and dew.
So Pellenore pressed on, hoping the while
To end the hunt, with trophies of a noble style.

When in the forest day began to fade
And hounds and deer were vanishing from sight
Among the trees beyond a hillside glade,
He thought he saw there, bathed in rosy light,
Some four and twenty ladies, small and bright,
Each clad in green and festive old-time dress,
Who, circling first three times upon the height,
Began to dance and sway each curling tress,
Weaving a pattern strange with tread slow and express.

But, as he rode into the glade, a swale
Which crossed his way, hid the fair dance from view;
And, when he rose beyond, he saw the pale
Hill grasses waving vacant, sparse and few,
And, where he thought to find that lightsome crew,
A circle of turf and mosses lustrous green.
Then from the west a fog came drifting blue,
In which the salt of ocean still was keen,
And with thick, swirling tides filled all the darkening
scene.

Sir Pellenore spurred toward the muffled sound
Of dogs, now running in the vale below,
And groped in darkness, till on rising ground
He saw through mist the evening's tranquil glow.
But far behind he heard the others blow
Their signals of retreat, with anxious horn —
Now here now there, through fog assembling slow,
To make a forest bivouac forlorn
And round a dull red fire find rest until the morn.

Meanwhile the stag had gained upon the hounds
And toward the nearby mountain fled away,
Till in a willow thicket that surrounds
A vast, drear bog he vanished from the day.
Then, while they sought his trace with deep mouthed
bay,
He passed through darkened woods to a mountain
stream,
Waded high up where whitening rapids play,
While overhead the stars began to gleam,
And hid in a still glen, where blackest shadows teem.

The hounds came baying to the darkened stream,
Then wandered silent over either bank.
Sir Pellenore observed them in the beam
Of a pale star and felt the evening dank.
Southwards he turned the courser's panting flank,
Calling the dogs with loudly echoing horn;
And, where the forest rose in double rank,
He chose a track along which peat was borne,
By night to seek his friends, though far and late and
worn.

But, while he slowly followed the dark track,
The weary hounds a distance in the rear,
Black shapes of kerns rose in surprise attack,
On every side at once, upspringing near.
One thrust him in the shoulder with a spear,
The others gripped him with resistless force,
While the scared hounds howled through the woods in
fear,
Bound him and laid him bleeding on his horse,
With face against the mane, then turned in northward
course.

They crossed the mountain stream, up which the deer
Had climbed through waters that no scent betrayed,
And, mounting through the forest, soon drew near
A level height fenced with a rough stockade.
One blew a horn, that deep and hoarsely brayed,
While starlit mountains magnified the sound.
A narrow gate swung inward, and they made
Their way into a grassy open ground
Before a wild, high hall — its roof in shadow drowned.

Then from the horse they raised Sir Pellenore,
His wrists and ankles bound together tight,
And laid him on the turf before the door.
Meanwhile with torches flaring red and bright
The inhabitants came hastening round the knight.
Their bushy brows, their shaggy, raven hair,
Their eager eyes shone in the dancing light,
That played about lean arms and knees left bare.
Strange and grotesque they seemed in the glowing,
smoky air.

But most of all a squat and hideous hag,
With huge and ill curved nose of Asian land,
Like some ill boding owl perched on a snag.
Bent forward with a torch held in one hand,
She peered with small, crossed eyes and keenly scanned
The youth, a scowl contracting all her brow.
Then suddenly she let the frown expand,
Her staring eyes appeared less fierce, and now,
As if to smile, her great mouth curled in a ghastly mow.

For she perceived a youth of noble mould,
Though bound and helpless there, in piteous plight.
His head uncovered shone with locks of gold,
His fine, bold features, turned to marble white,
Gleamed like Apollo's statue in the light,
That just revealed each strong and graceful limb.
And he appeared a gentle, courteous knight.
Then, as with ghastly mow she stared at him,
She marked the trickling blood, a sign of danger grim.

Her torch was pointed at the lower end,
And this she planted in the ground near by,
Where to his shoulder the best light would tend,
Adjusted nicely, as with practised eye.
Then from a cumbrous basket standing nigh
She drew a pair of shears and cut the thong
Which held his arms behind, till they could lie,
Easing the wound, at either side along,
And laid the shoulder bare, shearing the tunic strong.

Then, kneeling, from her basket she took out
Strange means and simples of the healer's art,
Each from its jar, with no delay or doubt,
Her skinny fingers supple in every part.
Checking the blood with some astringent tart,
She cleansed the wound with wisely moistened lint,
That stayed infection and relieved the smart;
Bound it with linen clouts of pallid tint,
Hung from his neck and shoulder; and with careful squint

Of her crossed eyes was making ready to sew
The tunic that her shears had opened wide.
But suddenly a kern cried out, "Ro, Ro,
Begone!" and thrust her rudely to one side,
Trampling the wounded knight with darkling stride.
Then Pellenore, whom that hard riding day
And lapsing blood and pain had sorely tried,
With the rough shock and jostling swooned away
And limp and pale as death within the torchlight lay.

The throng of kerns gave way and faced the door
In silence and respect, for now their chief
Came from the hall, his mustache gleaming hoar,
About his neck a golden chain and sheaf,
His face deep lined and something bowed with grief.
Looking with pity on the fainting youth,
He bade one loose his bonds and grant relief.
So goodly form can move a mind uncouth,
The Cambrian mountain chief gazed at his foe with ruth.

His lady following close, stood at his side,
Dressed in a sable snood and mourning weeds.
Wasted in face she looked and hollow eyed,
Like one who hourly on a sorrow feeds.
And with her too the knight's fair weakness pleads,
Awaking mercy and a transient joy —
A mother's gladness to find youth and needs.
And to her lord she said, "Ah, Owen Roy,
Happy his mother, for she still has her dear boy!"

Meanwhile the kern who thrust the hag away
Perused with care the face of Pellenore,
Then, turning suddenly, cried in dismay:
"That hapless eve, I lay a scout before
The ford of Usk. Too late I saw a score
Of archers, all deployed and on the run,
And close behind them rode a knight. He wore
His beaver up. My lord, this is the one!
I saw that very face. He killed your only son."

A dozen hands were laid on Cambrian knives,
And all looked toward their chief for sign or word,
While from wild, scowling kerns and dusky wives
A low but fierce and threatening murmur stirred.
The chief himself, the moment when he heard
That sudden news, had partly drawn his blade.
But there he paused, for now the thought occurred
That death could be more bitter, if delayed,
And vengeance be fulfilled, if torture lent its aid.

And then his lady spoke in grave alarm:
"Owen, beware! This man is Arthur's knight.
The king will hear, if we dare do him harm.
He will march on us with resistless might,
Our hall and bowers will sink in ruddy fire,
And all of us will die in hopeless fight
Or, scattered far in mountain cave and byre,
Hope that some few escape from his pursuing ire.

"Let us take vengeance in a safer way:
We'll find some riddle that he cannot guess
And bid him answer on a certain day.
Then you will swear that, if good fortune bless
His wit, he shall win freedom by success.
And he shall promise on his knightly word
That Arthur will not aid him in distress,
And, if he fails, he dies a gallows bird.
King Arthur will defer to honor, though absurd."

With a grim smile the chieftain made reply,
“ ’Tis well. The feast is waiting in the hall.
We will go in, and later you and I
Will think at leisure how this may befall.”
Then to a liegeman standing near the wall,
“Take him away and hold him safely barred
Within a vacant bower, until I call.
Keep him secure and under trusty guard,
Careful that he may live, lest we should be ill starred.”

The liegeman bade four kerns take up the knight,
And, while with blazing torch he went before,
They skirted the long hall through dancing light
Into a bower with well trod earthen floor,
Then in the midst strewed heather from a store
And near by set the torch, which brightly burned.
And on this couch they laid Sir Pellenore,
Who now began to stir and vaguely spurned
And opened eyes amazed, when sense at length returned.

At this the liegeman had two followers bring
A rude repast: a great slice of rye bread,
Cut thick and square and laid flat on the ling,
On which a wild boar’s roasted brawn was spread;
And goat’s milk in a horn set near the bed.
Then Pellenore, though he was sore and faint
And crippled with his wound, sat up and fed,
Quaffing the milk despite its ranker taint.
The liegeman sitting near, kindly, though rough and
quaint,

Conversed with him in mountain dialect strange,
Telling how some had trapped and speared the boar,
That in their pen of swine had dared to range,
How one had fallen, deep gashed and streaming gore,
And beldame Ro had toiled with all her lore
To save his life, for she was now their leech.
Their medicine men, he said, and many more
Died near the ford of Usk upon a beach.
And then as one who had said too much, he checked his
speech.

Rising, he seized the torch and hastened out,
Then with a leaning log made fast the door
And bade two restless kerns keep watch about
The bower and often enter and explore
Within, while he a little way before
The entrance, strewing heather on the ground,
Lay down to rest. Meanwhile Sir Pellenore,
Still weak and weary, lapsed in sleep profound,
Though waking briefly at the watchers' light and sound.

Within the hall the Cambrians, most and least,
Appeased their hunger but without the joy
Which formerly had blest an ample feast,
For all were mourning kindred, man or boy.
Down the long table only few could toy
With converse, and, though twice the hydromel
Went round to all, it cheered with much alloy.
Dead was the harper whom they loved so well,
A stranger tried a song, which brief and joyless fell.

The chief gave thanks and largess to the bard,
Then rose and briefly bade them all good night.
While most withdrew to bowers within the yard,
Guiding their steps by torches' ruddy light;
Some cleared away the feast, sweeping to right
And left each bone and scrap for great lean dogs
To seize and often quelling a noisy fight,
Then laid them near the fire of peat and logs,
Which dimly lit the hall and its blue, smoky fogs.

The firelight showed the hump back of the hag.
She watched the youth sore stricken with the boar,
Trying his pulse to mark its haste or lag,
Then on splay feet tiptoed about the floor
To warm a soothing drench that might restore
His soft, refreshing sleep of healthful days.
Her queer, wide shoulders, as she moved before
The fire, were black and stark against the blaze.
At her approach the sufferer turned away his gaze.

This she observed, yet, feigning not to see,
She labored quietly to ease his pain -
And stop new ill by timely ministry,
Until the danger seemed upon the wane;
Then, for his comfort, hastened to refrain
And tiptoed with her basket out the door
But in a while stole gently back again,
Found him soft sleeping on the heath strewn floor,
And, hovering darkly near, scanned him with care once
more.

At the hall's farther end there burned a fire.
There, when a feast was done and night was chill,
The chieftain and his lady would retire
And with two dark eyed daughters rest at will,
Basking on stools or heather couch until
Well warmed they could depart to bower and sleep.
And sometimes wife and daughters plied their skill
To spin and weave coarse wool of highland sheep
Or lay it in a vat of dye, nightlong to steep.

And here the liegeman brought the chieftain word
How Pellenore now seemed recovering well,
Which with attentive ear the chieftain heard,
And how the knight lay guarded in his cell.
And of the steed he then went on to tell,
How it had browsed without on moorland grass
And now was stabled, till the dawn to dwell
With the rough nag caught once in some morass,
Which bore their messenger on mountain trail and pass.

The liegeman took his leave. The chieftain signed
To both his daughters that they should retire,
Then with his lady turned his wary mind
To avenge their son yet frustrate Arthur's ire.
They sought what riddle they might best require
The foe to solve, which he could never guess.
"Ask him," she said, "What women most desire."
On this agreed, they pondered nonetheless
What answer he must give or fail of all success.

Now through the dusk the hag came shambling near,
Bent like a witch within the fire's mild ray,
And, as her hideous form began to appear,
Both chief and lady turned their eyes away.
She at their loathing bowed as in dismay
And hoarsely said, "My lord, the herdsman's life
Is safe. He'll drive the swine by New Year's Day!"
The chieftain answered, with aversion rife,
" 'Tis well. Give him good care. And get you gone, old
wife!"

"My lord, I pray you, bear with her a while,"
The lady cried, "Perhaps she will inspire
A shrewder choice." And with a mocking smile
She asked her, "Goody Ro, ere you retire,
What do *you* say that women most desire?"
The hag first bowed, then raised her great, square head
And grinned, her snag teeth shining with the fire.
Then in a hoarse, deep voice she slowly said,
"Dominion both before and after they are wed."

"Why that's an answer he will never guess,"
The chieftain cried, rubbing his eager hands.
The lady too was glad and answered "Yes!"
So voyagers lost at sea find welcome lands.
And they dismissed the hag with strict commands
That she be secret. Then a little while
They planned together near the glowing brands
How they might soon destroy the knight with guile
And win by safest means revenge in fitting style.

As morn's red beam first lit the mountain height
And in the forest, gray fog shrouded all,
The liegeman by command awoke the knight
And led him straightway to the high roofed hall,
Two kerns with darts attending, fierce and small.
Though pale, though wounded and in shorn attire,
The knight walked boldly, seeming fair and tall.
Both chief and lady, seated near their fire,
Seeing him enter, paused a moment to admire.

"Sir knight," the chieftain said, "you know full well
That near the ford of Usk in ill starred fight
Our Cambrians by the cruel Britons fell,
Shedding their dearest blood for chief and right.
And their brave leader at the battle's height
Died haplessly, for so his fate was spun,
A youth in plaid matched with an armored knight.
That knight had shown his face ere strife begun:
Yours are his bloodstained hands. The youth was my
dear son."

"Chieftain," replied the blue eyed Pellenore,
"We all do venture life who take up arms.
He died in open fight, his wounds before,
Attended by his battling Cambrian swarms.
I struck him caught where day and plain were harms,
He would have struck me at the twilight's glow,
Mired in some bog through Jack o' Lantern charms,
And such will be my fate for aught I know.
Yet I must mourn that I have killed a gallant foe.

“Ah, would that he might be the last to fall
In our sad warring over sheep and swine,
That the Britons and the Cambrians, one and all,
Might end their wars and honorably combine!
To such a peace our king would soon incline,
Would but the Cambrians grant that I might bear
Their wish for friendship. Then it could be mine
To bring good terms and so in part repair
The evil of the past with days more bright and fair.”

“Dream not of peace, his blood upon your hands!”
The chieftain answered, rising fierce and proud.
“The other night, from where the watcher stands —
The waning moon hid by a somber cloud —
My Owen’s shape was seen in sorrow bowed,
Approaching slow across the darkened glade,
Leading his slaughtered troop, a shadowy crowd.
They glided through the pales of our stockade
And, pausing near the hall, their gristly wounds displayed.

“Then, as the moon broke from the drifting cloud,
And suddenly its radiance touched them there,
Lifting their eerie arms, they shrieked aloud
And vanished all at once in misty air.
Soon of their visitation made aware,
I knew its meaning with a guilty pang
They craved revenge with mute and awful prayer;
I vowed my vengeance, while the screech owl sang;
And high before this hall, atoning, you shall hang.

“But you shall have one chance, for I have heard
Strange news of Arthur and his Table Round —
That, if a knight has pledged his sacred word,
Though it should cost his life, he still is bound,”
“ ‘Tis true, and for good faith they are renowned,”
The knight replied. “Enough. I will believe,”
The chief returned, “for so it has been found.
Therefore my lady has obtained my leave
That she may now impart the terms of your reprieve.”

“Last night within a rosy afterglow
Appeared the first slim crescent of the moon,”
The lady then began. “We’ll let you go
Once more to Arthur’s court, but for this boon
You shall take oath that you’ll return, as soon
As another moon first glimmers in the sky,
And read a riddle I will give. Immune
You shall depart, if rightly you reply;
But, if you answer wrong, on the gallows you shall die.”

“And further you shall swear,” the chieftain said,
That neither Arthur nor his knights will stir
To save your life nor to avenge you dead.
Your only hope shall lie in answering her.
Now make your choice. Which course do you prefer —
To hang before this hall without delay
Or take your solemn oath — with no demur,
Then hear my lady’s riddle, ride away,
And bring your answer on the eight and twentieth day?”

“I’ll take my chance for life,” replied the knight,
“And on my sword will swear what you require.”
One brought it in. He raised it to the light, —
The handle showed a cross against the fire —
And swore to run the lady’s hazard dire.
“And now,” she said, “the riddle you must read
Shall be to tell what women most desire.
So get you gone from here and take good heed,
If you would save your neck, when comes the time of
need!”

Sir Pellenore climbed weakly on his horse
And rode out through the gate, across the glade.
Then, turning round, before he chose his course,
Gazed at the hall — its dragon heads displayed,
And the wild peaks in morning light arrayed.
Assured that he would recognize the scene,
He entered gladly into forest shade,
Where his lost hounds appeared with joyous mien
And followed in a pack, though famished, yet serene.

With them he traveled down the forest way,
Crossing again the tumbling mountain stream,
And found the bog, deep fringed with willows gray.
He turned southeastward toward the sun’s bright beam,
Which sometimes through the yellowing trees would
gleam.
Now loud and often he blew the clear voiced horn
To call his friends, and, faint as in a dream,
He heard their answer on the south wind borne.
And so at last they came, to find him faint and worn.

And they induced him through some days to rest,
Laid on a couch of blankets and pine boughs,
To heal the wound in part, ere he addressed
Him to long travel back through hills and sloughs.
But often in wakeful hour or anxious drowse
Rose dread of life deserted by Etarre
Or shameful death deferred by parlous vows.
Then autumn rains and raging streams debar
The course of his return and make it doubly far.

* * * * *

In many toweréd Camelot he told
His story to the king and all the court.
And Arthur doubted if they could unfold
The mystery, for now the time grew short
Before the knight must go to Owen's fort,
And wizard Merlin had been sought in vain:
Often he vanished to a far resort
In the wood Broceliande, where fairies reign,
Or misty Lyonesse girt by the western main.

Among the courtiers many thought to guess
What it could be that women most desire.
Each passing hour they sought the knight, to press
On him such answers sure as gay attire,
Choice fare, or many lovers who admire,
A goodly husband, riches, length of days,
Fair children, or a strong man's heart on fire.
Queen Guinevere, proud in her beauty's blaze,
Told him, apart, "These gifts, on which men fondly gaze:

“Rich, curling tresses, golden as the morning;
A smooth, bright blushing cheek; love-darting eyes,
That shine in melting mood or flash their warning;
Ripe, curving lips, that smile a glad surprise
And ravish ear and eye with tender sighs;
A full, white bosom and arms of fair repose,
With flower soft hands whose touch seems paradise;
In all a stately port, and as she goes,
The silken sheen and liquefaction of her clothes!”

Sir Pellenore gave thanks in humble guise,
Yet in his mind he often wondered how
So many could be so diversely wise
And weighed their words with pale and thoughtful brow,
Pondering which one might free him from his vow.
But Sir Bors mourned: “If Owen sought the truth,
He would have asked their seers — before and now,
And found no answer that is always sooth.
The riddle’s but a trick to kill you without ruth.”

And Arthur said, when he was to depart,
“Dear knight, farewell. You are not fortune’s slave.
Keep, as before, a pure and a stout heart.
The King of Kings will love the pure and brave
And still may show an unguessed way to save
Your life. And, though they kill the mortal frame,
Your soul will rise triumphant from the grave
And, leaving with us all an honored name,
Mount up to his true home, received with heaven’s ac-
claim.”

As Pellenore rode, near his journey's end,
November's low gray clouds hid all the sky,
Shrouding the rough, wild mountains that impend
About the valley where the hall would lie.
An east wind, bending tree-tops bare and dry,
Made a low roaring that oppressed the ear
And caused a few last leaves to part and fly
Down in pale wayside grass and bracken sere.
Even early afternoon was strangely dark and drear.

Yet in a leafless thicket near his way
A thrush alighted and began to sing,
Trilling as sweetly as in sunlit May,
And wakened in his heart the joy of spring.
"O sweet voiced bird," he thought, "you come to bring
The sad world hope that spring will not be far.
But can I hope for life's fair blossoming,
When love is blighted by the false Etarre
And I am like to die before the Evening Star?"

Then in a glade just opening to the sight
A gleam of sunshine bathed with golden ray
Some four and twenty ladies small and bright,
In robes of green and yellow tresses gay,
Who circled thrice, then moved in stately play.
But, as he rode, a tree hid that fair view,
And, when he passed beyond it on his way,
He saw the glade deserted and in lieu
Of the fair dance a ring of turf in dark green hue.

While Pellenore rode slowly through the glade,
Much doubting whether he could trust his sight;
Before him, coming from the forest shade,
There seemed to move a gnome in the wan light,
In pointed hood and cape of leather dight.
But soon he marked a cumbrous basket borne
In its left hand and shears held in the right,
Then small, crossed eyes in features blue and worn
And saw 'twas beldame Ro, abroad in time forlorn.

As she looked up and saw the tall young knight,
Her huge mouth curved, well pleased, in one vast grin,
And with her skinny hand she seemed to invite
Him to delay. Then, hobbling through gray whin
So tall it brushed against her palsied chin,
She hastened towards him. And, alas, he saw
All her left cheek from where the hairs begin
Purple with one gross birthmark to the jaw.
And yet his heart was kind, nor did his eyes withdraw.

“Good mother Ro,” he said, “I cannot guess
How I should meet you in this wintry wood,
Far from the hall and its warm fire, unless
It be that God in heaven is wise and good
And, looking in my heart, has understood
The thankfulness I felt but could not show
And brought you here beyond all likelihood,
So I might say these words before I go,
That to your kindness and your skill my life I owe.”

Then with sad look he added, "Now farewell."
But she with both hands clung upon the rein,
Crying, "Sir knight, first hear what I will tell!"
And he, though doubting what he had to gain
From old wives' wayside chatter, yet was fain
To keep death waiting — just a little while —
And savor life, whose moments seemed to wane.
Dismounting soon, he waited with a smile
For her to tell her message and his heart beguile.

"I gather simples of the leech's art,"
She then began, "And therefore I have leave
At any hour to enter or depart.
But I have other cause. For yester eve
'Twas said our chief gave you a moon's reprieve,
Bidding you find what women most desire,
And that before this night he must receive
Your answer, in his hall beside the fire."
Sir Pellenore replied, "Yes, so he did require."

"When the late, ruddy sunrise gave me light,
I chose a frosty path which seemed the way
Most like for me to meet with you, sir knight,
And gathered wayside herbs or resting lay.
But some good power seems guiding me today,
For first a rare herb led me far aside,
Then others drew me step by step astray
With a strange charm that might not be denied,
Till by this other track I stood and saw you ride."

“But why the kindly haste, good mother Ro,
That made you leave both rest and genial fire
To seek me here?” — “Sir knight, I want to know
If you have found the answer they require.”
“I doubt it, mother, though many friends conspire
And promise all success.” — “What have they said?”
And he, though brave, was moved by fond desire
To linger yet a while and so was led
To tell their every guess. She heard and shook her head.

“Sir knight, the gallows waits before the hall.
Ah pity one so fine and young should die!”
A sob convulsed her withered throat. — “If all
My answers fail, then as a true knight I
Will face my death, with trust in God on high.”
— “They all will fail, and death is near at hand.
Owen has laid a trap both fell and sly.
But I can foil the treachery they have planned
And I have come to tell what answer they demand.”

“Good mother, as for life, why should I care?”
And then he told her something of Etarre.
“Sir knight,” she answered him, “do not despair.
And you may find a maiden better far
To honor your true heart and heal the scar.
Men say that you are loved by court and king
And soon may hope, beneath a favoring star,
To do fair deeds, that through the world will ring,
And live in high romance, that future minstrels sing.”

“Ah mother, life again seems rich and bright.
But never could I think the deed was fair,
Should Owen guess why I have answered right
And you should feel his vengeance. Pray beware!”
— “First save your life, sir knight, then take good care
To seek me in the way by which you came.
But, ere I tell the answer, you shall swear
To do for me one service, I will name,
In gratitude for life and hope of future fame.”

“So I keep true to God and to my king,
Good mother, you shall have the wished reward.”
— “You shall be true to both.” — “Ah, name that thing
Which I may do, in thanks for life restored!”
— “Grant me a while for choice, sir knight, accord
Me leisure till you come again today.”
And then he swore the oath upon his sword.
She, whispering, told the words that he must say
And with a shriek of cackling laughter bounced away.

“Come, leave the beauty and your dallying play,
O gallant knight, though you had rather lag,
With courtly wiles leading fair maids astray.
And what a prize, to make your courage flag!”
So spoke the messenger, who on his nag
Had ridden silently into the glade
And found the knight in parley with the hag.
But, when the knight laid hand upon his blade,
The messenger turned back and spurred for home afraid.

The knight leaped on his horse and, cantering after
Along the forest way, he soon drew near
The messenger and saw, with inward laughter,
The coward spur his nag in panic fear.
Content with this, he let him disappear
Beyond a rise of ground, and slowly made
His way, until the Cambrian hall rose clear,
With dragon carvings, over the stockade,
Then turned to scan his road and where it left the glade.

Warned by the messenger, some dark browed kerns
Stood armed and ready near the open gate,
Took sword and horse, and bound his hands with turns
Of deer hide, while he saw the gallows wait
Within the yard. And soon they led him straight
Beneath it through the door, and up the hall
To where the chief and lady sat in state,
Smiling to hear the messenger tell all
His prowess with the knight, whom fear did much appall:

How he surprised him far outside the gate,
Dismounted in a glade and pale as snow;
How he began to taunt him and to rate
And made him mount and willy nilly go;
And how he often would have laid him low
But bowed to orders for the knight to hang.
In this he said no word of beldame Ro,
Lest they should learn how out of tune he sang.
And all would fain believe, and loud the laughter rang.

But, when Sir Pellenore came, fair and tall,
With noble face and figure strong and trim,
Moving with dignity up through the hall,
Which now with smoke and the dark day grew dim,
The laughter ceased and all men looked on him
In silent admiration. Yet there was none
But thought him fitter for their purpose grim.
And Owen said, "My lady, you have won
A splendid victim to appease our hapless son!"

So, when before them stood Sir Pellenore,
The chieftain nodded for his wife to inquire.
"Sir knight," said she, "Death waits outside the door.
The new moon comes again with crescent fire
Behind these clouds. Your days of grace expire,
And life depends on how your quest has sped.
Tell, if you can, what women most desire."
"Lady," said he and slightly bowed his head,
"Dominion both before and after they are wed."

Chieftain and lady stared a while astounded,
Then bade the knight repeat what he had said
And knew at last 'twas right and were confounded
To find their dream of vengeance now had fled.
Then roared the chieftain, flushing angry red,
"He could not guess, our counsel was betrayed!"
The messenger cried out, forgetting dread,
" 'Twas beldame Ro. With her he stayed —
Fair company indeed — to gossip in a glade."

“I’ll hang the tattling beldame in his place!”
The chieftain cried, his rage at highest pitch.
“Go, messenger, take some and lead a chase.
Go, drag her back to us, the loathsome witch!
At least we’ll see *her* dying carrion twitch.
Sir knight, I keep my word. Right ill content
I spare your life, for all my fingers itch
To hang you now. I wait a future hent
For my revenge. And now begone, lest I repent!”

The liegeman led Sir Pellenore away,
Unbound his arms, and gave him sword and horse
And even bade him covertly good day,
As a gleam of sunset reddened hay and gorse.
Sir Pellenore observed the Cambrian force
Deploying into every forest track.
With brief adieu he spurred in headlong course,
Following the well remembered roadway back,
And passed three kerns, who slunk aside in shadows
black.

And, as he rode into the brighter glade,
Upon the right a harsh and frightened cry
Rose suddenly from near the forest shade.
He saw the nag stand dark against the sky
And the messenger with cruel joy nearby
Dragging the beldame by her short white hair,
To lay her on the nag and safely tie,
Callous how rock might bruise or bramble tear.
Sir Pellenore rode near before he was aware.

As he leaped down, the dastard let her go
And laid hand on his knife. But Pellenore,
Catching his wrist, dealt him one ringing blow
That left him senseless on the forest floor.
The knight caught up the beldame, lean and hoar,
And set her on the little nag, astride.
Her skirts drawn up showed — what was hid before —
Her bowed and spindle shanks in stockings wried,
From bony knee to huge splay foot, that stuck out wide.

Of this aware, at once, as best she could
She pulled her skirts down over them, dismayed.
He, glancing back where he had left the wood —
The tree-tops now in sunset light displayed,
Saw the three kerns run out into the glade.
He seized her bridle and with eager eye
Observed the neighboring wood in twilight shade;
Then, mounting on his horse, made haste to fly,
While sling shots, humming past, struck in the boughs
near by.

His left hand on the bridle of the nag,
The knight could guide both steeds in cantering pace
Under the trees, past rock and fallen snag.
But, as a thicket met their eager race,
A sapling caught, then banged him in the face
And his good horse stumbled about to fall.
He let the bridle go and for a space
Plunged on alone through the dense forest wall
Some way into a glade, ere he could pause at all.

And, when he looked round, anxious for the hag,
He saw her drawing rein close by his side
With quiet ease controlling the rough nag,
That to her lightest hint at once replied.
As to the manner born, she seemed to ride,
Though stirrups hung too low and gave no aid.
“Follow, sir knight,” she said, “and I will guide
You to a cavern in a nearby glade —
A shelter for the night. The twilight soon will fade.”

Riding as if she grew into her seat,
She led the way beneath dark forest boughs,
Down a steep valley side, and round the peat
And reeds of flooded, golden-glimmering sloughs,
Where with loud flaps and quacks the wild ducks rouse,
And found the cavern in a darkened glade.
Dismounting soon, they let their horses brouse,
And, from his pannier taking food, they made
A darkling meal in silence — still of kerns afraid.

Then, while he tied the horses to a tree
Near by, lest they should stray through idle whim
Or prowling wolves should fright them from the lea —
Afar their cry was rising, weird and grim;
The beldame soon composed each weary limb
To sleep on the dry sand within the cave
And gladly felt her tired senses swim
Into slumber, while a mild breeze rose and gave
The forest pines a sound like gently plashing wave.

But she began most hideously to snore,
Filling the cavern with that rasping din,
And, entering there dismayed, Sir Pellenore
Despaired of slumber anywhere within.
He laid his blanket, warm though light and thin,
Gently about her and then stole away
Beneath a sheltering pine, and, lying in
The thick, dry needles, slept till break of day.
But well it chanced the night was warm till morning ray.

Aware that Owen might again pursue,
They made them ready with the earliest light
And, as the sun first touched the glistening dew,
He raised her stirrups to a fitting height,
And forth they moved — southeast where skies were
bright.
Right glad she was he often rode before
And let her follow hidden from his sight,
When in uncertain ways he must explore,
For with clear day each hideous feature showed the more.

But, while they rode, his thoughts were on the way,
Which they must wander, guided by the sun;
For headlong flight had borne them far astray
From country he had traversed and begun
To learn in part, and now their course would run
Through woodlands where few paths could give them
aid —
Opposed by ledge and bog and thicket dun
And rushing streams which they must safely wade
Or tract of somber pines with dense, obscuring shade.

And, when above a clear and sunny stream
They took some rest upon a sheltered lea,
He said with wonder that he did not dream
A Cambrian ever rode so well as she.
“ ’Twas in Armorica beyond the sea,”
She said, “my father by a green moor’s side
Reared horses for a lord of high degree,
Training each hopeful steed with joy and pride.
And, when my memory dawned, I knew and loved to
ride.

“Bareback or in the saddle every day
I rode beside him in the grassy hills,
My darling Whitefoot in red bridle gay,
And often in sport we jumped the moorland rills.
We loved the winter, when the white fog chills
Or whirling snowflakes in the sea wind teem,
But more fair summer, when the skylark trills
And blue forget-me-nots hide all the stream.
Ah, can such days have been or were they but a dream?

“And often with my kind mother I would ride,
While our retainers followed brightly dressed,
When she would search on moor and mountainside
For healing herbs and roam in eager quest
Until the golden sunset filled the west,
Then, riding home with dusk and brilliant sky,
She would prepare her drugs with healing blest.
And many lives she saved, as plague swept by;
But, over worn at last, my mother had to die.”

The hag began most miserably to weep,
Her pallor turning to a purple flush,
And wring her skinny hands, while sobbing deep
Up through her withered throat began to rush,
And tears from her crossed, wrinkled eyes to gush
And shine on her great, red veined, Asian nose.
Then, mindful of her plight, she strove to hush
The noisy sobs and still her wretched woes,
But, all defaced with tears, she trembled as she rose.

The knight could speak vague words of sympathy
But saw her hideous grief with much dismay
And knew not how to ease such misery,
Except by hastening to pursue their way
And make the most of short, bright hours of day.
And, wondering that she spoke as one still near
Fair childhood's days, he thought how in decay
And dotage childhood scenes may linger clear,
While all the years between will fade and disappear.

When they took rest again, he spoke by chance
Of the four and twenty ladies small and bright,
Their yellow tresses, and their stately dance,
That in the forest twice had met his sight,
And how they suddenly had vanished quite,
Leaving a mossy circle of rich green.
The beldame listened with a strange delight.
"You saw the fairies dance," she cried. "They mean
Good luck to those by whom they let their dance be
seen!"

As the low sun was gleaming far southwest,
A river crossed their way, both deep and wide,
And now the time for passage seemed the best —
The waters low at ebb of ocean tide.
Together they rode in; the waters glide
About their feet, raised on the horse's mane;
The good steeds battle hard; the riders guide
Their heads up toward the stream. At last they gain
The farther shore and clamber to a grassy plain.

But none too soon they reached the other side
And clambered high and safe upon the shore;
For all at once they heard the turning tide
Rush inland with a deep and mighty roar —
A wall of water sweeping on before
And wild waves, tumbling white and fierce behind,
Dashing against the banks, while spray flew hoar.
Then thundering waters, passing, dazed the mind,
And foam and billows reddened, while the sun declined.

As Israel's offspring in an older day,
Released from Egypt, yet compelled to flee,
Beheld the waters ebb and made their way
Safely at last across the wide Red Sea,
Then saw the flood rush back resistlessly,
With white waves leaping high from shore to shore,
Till all pursuit was past and they were free
To seek their land! So thought Sir Pellenore,
Assured that now the Cambrian would pursue no more.

Across a wide salt marsh they slowly rode,
Where autumn still was brilliant in the hay,
Then followed up a little brook that flowed
Down a small, winding valley, hid away
From cold sea wind and warm with setting day.
Dismounting there, he let the beldame lie
Swathed in his blanket in the sun's mild ray
And sought for fuel their wet attire to dry
And give some warmth beneath November's midnight
sky.

First to a patch of sunlit furze he went
To gather it as kindling for their fire.
Drawing his sword, he reached with hand intent
To seize the stem that he might first require.
The beldame, watching, cried out shrill and dire,
"Sir knight, beware the furze. Sir knight, beware!"
The shrill cry made him suddenly retire,
And, while he turned towards her a doubting stare,
With short, quick bounds and staff upraised she hastened
there.

She beat amid the furze clump, hit or miss,
The stems gave way, the hoar leaves scattered wide,
And underneath there rose a savage hiss,
And soon, emerging from the farther side,
A brindled adder fled with sinuous glide
Down to his den beneath a mossy stone.
The beldame turning, livid and cross-eyed,
Trembled all over and began to moan,
Then swooned away, with foaming mouth and hideous
groan.

But Pellenore soon conquered his dismay.
Gently he raised the hag up in his arms,
And at the brook he washed the foam away.
Held by his arm, she woke without alarms,
Gazed in his kindly eyes, and feared no harms.
"Good mother, we are safe within this dell" —
And in her ear both word and voice had charms.
"The air grows chill, the snake will not be fell.
Good mother, you have saved my life and all is well!"

Soundly the beldame slumbered near the fire,
And never ceased her loud and rasping snore.
The knight would warm himself and then retire
Until the falling brook subdued the roar.
But, though at times he drowsed, Sir Pellenore
Found little rest and often waked in fright
From nightmares of the rushing tidal bore
About to overwhelm them in its thundering might.
And so they passed a long and cold November night.

With hoarfrost sparkling in the early light,
They rode on up the vale, and soon they found
A highway running, narrow, firm, and white,
Southwest along some high and level ground.
Gladly they followed it and often wound
Above wide marshes spreading to the sea,
Skirting a range of hills with sunlight crowned.
They let the horses canter merrily
And, while the way was lone, they traveled far with glee.

But soon they passed rough shepherds in the field
Or driving out their flocks to feed by day
And charcoal burners in the wood concealed
And many travelers on the good highway,
Then waking villages near castles gray,
Where artizans were toiling at their work,
Where in the square the children were at play,
And near the windows curious housewives lurk.
And all men turned toward them with stare or mocking
smirk.

In truth they were a strange appearing pair:
The knight rode nobly on a fine bay steed,
His figure young and tall, with face most fair,
Still neatly clad in his good leather weed.
The crone seemed rather of a scarecrow breed.
She rode a small, rough nag of awkward pace,
Her figure squat and oddly formed indeed,
With wrinkled cape now torn along the base,
Her features large and coarse in lean, discolored face.

So most men turned with stare or meaning smile.
But some, who felt concealed or not too near,
Showed their contempt and mirth in ruder style —
With loud guffaw or mocking scream and jeer,
And then would very quickly disappear.
And some made jests which they themselves found witty:
Such as, "Sir knight, your taste is rather queer,"
"Too bad the lady *isn't* very pretty,"
Or "That's a shape for Carnival in Arthur's city!"

Such wits would often hasten to get away —
So much that one plunged headlong in a ditch
And floundering breathless in the water lay,
Then rose up dripping mud as black as pitch.
The children, pointing talked about "the witch"
And babes in sudden terror shrieked and cried.
The beldame shrank dismayed, her mouth would twitch,
And close behind the knight she sought to hide.
Sir Pellenore himself was glad to turn aside

Into the hills along a grassy track,
Which through deep valleys took its quiet way,
Southward in trend but often doubling back.
And, thinking to relieve the hag's dismay,
He spoke of her first days, so glad and gay.
"Sir knight, I would forget my evil star!"
She cried, and led him on with art to say
More of himself, of the fair, false Etarre,
And Arthur and his knights, whose fame she knew afar.

At the brief, rosy glow of eventide
They saw an ancient abbey, standing gray
In stubble fields with orchards either side
And lights that offered cheer at close of day.
Sir Pellenore craved lodging there straightway.
The abbot, living in a far off dell
Where travelers and their news would rarely stray,
Joyed at their coming and received them well
And in a visitors' wing himself showed each a cell.

Two brothers brought to each a welcome tub
And poured in water, clear and steaming hot,
So they might bathe their wearied limbs and rub
Away the sordor of a traveler's lot;
And for a while their hardships were forgot.
The abbey bell then tolled the evening meal;
And brothers, listening to the knight, did not
Observe the hag, whom candles could reveal
In a soft friendly light and for the most conceal.

Delicious were the meats and wine they had
And ample — such the brothers rarely ate.
The abbot at their coming was so glad
That he prepared his best to celebrate,
And he detained the knight in converse late.
Yet in the quiet cell and couch made deep
With down Sir Pellenore could recreate
Himself with hours of sweet, refreshing sleep,
Before on highest hills the dawn began to peep.

They breakfasted by candles kindly faint,
And Pellenore laid down fair coins of gold
As offering to the abbey's patron saint,
Alban, first martyr in the days of old.
Food for their way, as much as he could hold
Within his pannier, and, for the horses, grain
The abbot gave them, and with care he told
Them of their road, south through the hills to gain
High toweréd Camelot above its fertile plain.

* * * * *

Some days they traveled on and saw at last
The walls and towers of lovely Camelot,
In a pale December sun a little past
The height of noon. Then, hastening at a trot,
They reached his dwelling in a sheltered spot
Outside the walls, hid in a grove of pine.
And there his gray haired squire, rejoicing, got
An ample meal prepared for them to dine —
Cabbage and turnips steaming round a great pork chine.

The pannier had afforded scanty fare
For several days of travel, and the knight
Felt hungrier from his ride in winter air
And ate his meal with eager appetite.
But the lean, ravenous hag surpassed him quite.
She finished the great chine, huge loaves of bread,
Cabbage and turnips — every thing in sight!
The knight, aghast, recalled what once he read
Of raging Famine come from lands of winter dread.

While through the pane December sun gave light,
He seemed to trace gaunt Famine's likeness there:
Her greed for food, the hair of tumbled white,
Her ghastly face and eyes of hollow stare,
Great livid lips, and hideous teeth that tear
Each morsel they can find, the wrinkled throat,
Lean hands, and skinny arms — now partly bare —
Which made their bony elbows seem to bloat.
But uglier far she looked than all the poet wrote!

Such thoughts passed through his mind, bewildering,
When suddenly a page rapped at the door
And summoned them at once before the king.
Soon they were out and riding forth once more:
Upon the right the tall Sir Pellenore
And on the left the elegant young page;
Between them rode the hag, both squat and hoar,
In ragged cape, and ugliness, and age.
Never was stranger contrast made on any stage.

Slowly through noble gates they had to ride
And up an avenue. They saw men glitter
In courtly dress and felt on every side
The appraising stares and heard the frequent titter.
For Pellenore the way was long and bitter.
He hoped that honorably he might shun
Her future company but was no quitter
And meant to care for her ere he had done,
Now she had ventured all that he might see the sun.

The hag seemed of one thing alone aware —
That soon her former way of life would end,
And, heedless of the people's smile or stare,
She seemed preparing for what might impend.
And, riding near, she oftentimes would send
An anxious look up towards the noble knight,
Now, in a hostile world, her only friend,
Who had shown kindness in her wretched plight.
For him she was again the comrade of their flight.

The king and queen sat in their room of state,
Planning fit answer to a Saxon power,
With knights and counsellors in grave debate
Whether the suppliant foe did truly cower
Or they must fear that danger still would lour.
Seeing the page, they bade the statesmen go
Apart and bring their counsel in an hour.
The knight and hag drew near and bowed down low,
And Arthur's kindly smile included beldame Ro.

"Welcome, dear knight," he said, "We had much hope
From one who saw you on the good highway
That you had foiled the Cambrian's fatal rope.
We trust that we may deem you safe today.
Is it true, dear knight?" — "My king," he cried, "you
may.
I learned how their dark riddle could be read —
What women most desire." — "Ah, who can say?
What was the answer to that riddle dread?"
— "Dominion both before and after they are wed."

Some courtiers made a murmur of dissent,
And Guinevere declared it was not so,
For they had been most sure nor were content
To find they had but guessed and did not know.
"O queen," said Pellenore, "I merely show
What Cambrians hold that women most desire.
I made that answer, and they let me go,
Amazed at first, then loth and with much ire.
The reading may be false, but such they did require."

“Tell us, dear Pellenore,” pursued the king,
“How you could guess what those wild people thought.”
— “O sire, this ancient dame, whom I now bring
Before you, in the forest pathway sought
Me, as I rode desponding, and she taught
The answer that would foil their cruel plot.
On her they planned revenge, they would have caught
And hanged her in my stead, if I had not
Set her upon their nag and fled beneath their shot.”

“Tell all the tale in order,” said the king,
“That we may know how these strange things occurred.”
The knight told of the fairies in their ring,
The beldame finding him, though she had erred,
— Here some thought fairy power must be inferred —
And of her offering that unhopd for aid,
How he feared for her safety and demurred
And how she bade him ride back to that glade,
And what ensued, till they escaped in woodland shade.

“The Cambrian bound us not to interfere,”
Observed the king, “And we must be content
With your escape and safe arrival here.
If he offends again, he shall be shent.
But that first eve, when you lay bound and spent
And bleeding near the hall, an ancient dame
Staunched the deep wound with simples wisely blent.
And was it she, who through the forest came
To read that riddle dread?” — “O king, she is the same.”

“Then, kindly dame, we are much bound to you,
Who twice have saved the life of our brave knight —
With loss of all and mortal peril too.
What can we offer, something to requite
Your service and your loss? It would seem right
To give white age repose before the fire;
But, if your healing art still has delight,
The leech’s aid a score of towns require —
At leisure you shall name the one you most desire.”

Then said the hag, “O king, in humblest wise
I thank you, but decline. I long still more
For something that I now would claim as prize.
Before I gave him aid, Sir Pellenore
Promised, as my reward, and gravely swore
That one thing I should ask him he would do.
And I desired some leisure to explore
What might be best.” The knight averred, ”Tis true!”
“Tell us then,” said the king, “what recompense is due.”

“O king, he gave his word full solemnly,
As he agrees, that I might claim this right.
And now I ask that he should marry me
And take me home, his bride, this very night.”
Sir Pellenore grew faint and ghastly white.
Both knights and ladies — for all loved him well —
Murmured dissent and pity for his plight;
And Arthur, though he raised his hand to quell
The growing tumult, longed to avert a fate so fell.

“Good dame,” he said, “though justice be your plea,
Consider well that he has saved your life
And brought you to this court, where you are free
To live a pensioner relieved of strife
Or offer balm and hope when pain is rife.
This should be weighed. If you require still more,
You may have much, yet let him choose his wife.
Be his true friend, as you have been before,
Content with honors that become the wise and hoar.”

“O king,” rejoined the hag, “I claim my right.
I ask Sir Pellenore to marry me,
According to his promise as a knight,
And make me partner of his life and fee.”
Then Arthur, very loth, perceived that he
Must grant her wish or have the knight forsworn.
But Guinevere glared at her angrily
And would have voiced the courtiers’ rage and scorn,
Thinking by fear and shame she could be overborne.

Preventing this, cried out Sir Pellenore:
“O king, I will agree to marry her,
Granting her wish, as in my need I swore,
To take her home this night with no demur.
Then give me a desperate quest, that I may spur
In some good cause beneath another sky —
In foreign land or wood of northland fir,
And so upon the field of honor I
Shall lead my ill starred life and soon and bravely die.”

“Good faith and courage well become a knight,”
King Arthur said, “and in our warring day
How often we want men brave in deadly fight!
But patience glows still higher. In war it may
Lead toward success when courage finds no way,
In peace how often men need its gentle sway
To smile beneath an ill they cannot cure —
A hapless marriage, failure, life’s decay!
Heaven tries our worth by bidding us endure.
We send no knight to die until our need is sure.”

The statesmen now craved audience with the king
Regarding terms to give the Saxon power,
And Pellenore withdrew and strove to bring
His heart to patience for the wedding hour.
The queen had beldame Ro led to her bower
To bathe and dress her as might fit a bride.
But fair attire made her more grossly lour,
Her raiment fitted worse the more they tried,
And ghastly was her face and all their art defied.

Well meaning friends came to Sir Pellenore
To bid him think a wife so frail and white
Could linger but a year or little more
And then would quit this world in heavenward flight.
Sir Kay observed that with due care he might
Encourage her to seek a land so fair —
Might chance to bar her out in winter night
Or let her totter high on palace stair.
But Pellenore in horror sought the outer air.

Behind the palace a royal garden dreamed
In early dusk and bedded winter state,
While over all the young moon gently beamed,
And there he roamed some time disconsolate,
Till, sailing high above the outer gate,
Two wingèd dragons brought an airborne car
And circled downward at a slowing rate,
And, as they touched the ground without a jar,
Stepped forth white bearded Merlin, come from lands
afar.

The dragons moved their wings, yet made no sound.
While Pellenore beheld with wondering eyes,
They rose, in moonlight circling round and round,
And then turned southward, where the wild swan flies,
And vanished far in dim and starlit skies.
As Pellenore stood in the moon's mild glow,
Merlin drew near and said in kindly wise,
"Fear not your wedding, son, of which I know.
Another's trial I would tell, before I go.

"In far Provence, above the warm blue sea,
The wizard of a castle weird and white
Held a fair lady in captivity,
By hunger driven to take the marriage rite.
But she still loved a brave and wounded knight;
And Brandimart, his friend, subdued each guard,
Vanquished the wizard in a mortal fight,
And brought the lady to the castle yard,
But found the outer gate by magic closed and barred.

“When he had tried all skill and force in vain,
The lady said, ‘I now recall a way,
The only way, to save our lives and gain
Release.’ She led him from the light of day
Down to a gloomy vault, rank with decay,
Where dead men’s bones led toward a sepulcher.
‘One lies in there,’ she cried. ‘Now truly say,
Are you so brave that nothing can deter
You, if I bid you go and kiss the lips of her?’

“ ‘I am,’ said he. — ‘Then go and lift the lid.’
He raised it and at first bent near, to take
A view of something in the darkness hid,
But, starting back, began to pale and quake,
As from the grave a huge and purple snake
Raised a fell head with fear inspiring hiss
And from bare fangs the black tongue seemed to break.
‘Sir knight, fear not, as you have hope of bliss,’
The lady cried, ‘Lay hold on her and boldly kiss!’

“The brave knight, rallying to their cause,
Gripped the cold, scaly neck, with all his will;
And, as the viper closed its hard, dry jaws,
He gave the kiss. He felt a grisly chill
Through his warm flesh into the marrow thrill.
More fearsome that, son, than your wedding hour!
Yet he won safety from the threatening ill
And rode with armor charmed by fairy power.
I go to warn the king of dangers that still lurk.”

A marvel, as it seemed to Pellenore
Was Merlin's knowledge that he was to wed,
How Merlin learned it through his wizard lore,
Though come from far, by airborne chariot sped.
A greater marvel seemed that venture dread
Of Brandimart, saved by the fearsome kiss.
"Dare I take comfort?" in his heart he said,
"His land has wonders never known to this
And tales which travel far too often are told amiss."

And yet some courage from the tale he took,
When in the church he met his ghastly bride,
And through the ceremony he could brook
Her panting and loud wheezing by his side.
Few courtiers came, and none cared to abide
After the organ's loud, exulting swell.
Sir Ambrose fled, shamefaced and teary eyed;
Sir Bors drew near and sadly wished them well;
The sexton rang his peal as if he tolled a knell.

A chariot, waiting outside at the door,
Drove with the newly married pair away,
And much it comforted Sir Pellenore
That winter night upon the city lay:
Few were abroad, and no one cared to stray
Idly about or cast the sharp lampoon.
The guard observed them by a torch's ray,
Then to the sleeping fields they passed and soon
Were driving home through friendly silence of the moon.

Yet he recalled his dreams of fair Etarre,
A lovely partner in his crescent life,
Of golden years that beckoned from afar,
With inspiration for each noble strife,
And felt the cruel mockery of this wife,
An ape in form, his granddame in her years,
Of leaden months with dragging weight, all rife
With hopeless loathing and unmanly fears
That kindness might add pity, malice sting with jeers.

The gray haired squire, who waited at the door,
Stared open mouthed at the hag in wedding dress,
And at their news — told by Sir Pellenore —
He found no word to greet them or to bless
But stood there in unutterable distress,
Then, turning toward his kitchen, fled away.
They found a table spread, but none will guess
Their wedding supper could be long or gay:
Both seemed to wait in fear the end of that strange day.

When they were left together by the fire,
The hag sat on a couch in its pale glow,
Her small, crossed eyes fixed on him to inquire
How she might comfort him, as to and fro
He paced the floor and wrung his hands in woe
And sadly bowed his fair and noble head.
At length he paused and sighed, "Ah, Mother Ro,
Why did you save my life that *we* might wed?
And why must I live on, though I were better dead?"

"Dear Pellenore," kindly she answered him,
"With cause you grieve that you have married me —
A white haired hag, squat and deformed of limb,
Ugly past words, whom all men loathe to see.
And your true friends all grieve in sympathy.
Far better you deserve. I am aware,
Like them, how young and fair your wife should be.
What will you think my grief, when I declare
That last year I was young and many called me fair?"

"*You* might have sought me for your bride,
If we had met but one short year ago.
Oh, why was that felicity denied?
How little time has brought such wrack and woe!
You shake your head and think, 'Ah, ancient Ro,
You are beguiled by doting memory.
It was not one year past, but fifty!' No,
That I was young — long since, you may agree;
That any called me fair, you think could never be.

"At court I saw two young Armoric knights.
Ask them of my dear father, good Sir Hugh.
With him they rode far over moorland heights,
Last winter in a pearly morning dew;
Until a sudden fog hid all their view
And none of them could mark a sight or sound
To guide them, only his loved daughter knew
A brook near by, where healing herbs abound,
Which crossed a road that led them to familiar ground.

“Ask of that daughter, whether they have known
Her both at home and at the great lord’s court,
And how she loved to ride her little roan,
Whitefoot, and led in all the moorland sport,
And of the tourney, if they can report
That she was chosen the queen and gave the prize
Upon that field where all brave knights resort,
Then ask them whether any can surmise
How one night she was lost and vanished from men’s
eyes.”

Sir Pellenore recalled the Armoric youths,
Who waited in the throng before the king
Well might they know if she recounted truths,
For they first left Armorica that spring.
Yet, if they should agree in everything,
How might he think her transformation true?
Amazed he said, “Tomorrow I will bring
You to the knights and question of Sir Hugh.
But tell me of that maiden strangely lost to view.”

She answered him, “When my poor mother died,
My father for a while was bowed with grief,
Then suddenly rode forth and took a bride,
Brangan, a widow from an upland fief,
And in her company he found relief.
She brought her daughter and soon frowned on me,
The darling of my father and the chief
Among all maidens living near the sea.
She bided well her time and plotted covertly.

“Well read she was in arts that would compel
The strange and mighty aid of fairy power;
And, when my father was required to dwell
A while at court, she chose a witching hour,
When all men slept, and stood with baleful lour
Before my bed. In high, weird monotone
She chanted to me all my hideous dower,
Then held a mirror where my features shone,
And all at once I turned a foul and ghastly crone.

“She held the mirror up before my face
To show the monster that I had become,
Then drew my covers backward to the base.
All clothed in rags I was — with horror dumb,
My sight grew dim, my ears began to drum.
Calling her steward, with mocking lip
She bade him take away the beggar scum.
He led me forth, held in his iron grip,
And took me through black night aboard a foreign ship.

“At dawn we sailed out to the open sea —
Toward what land we were bound I never knew;
For soon a tempest broke, and furiously,
Now this way and now that, the wild wind blew,
How long I cannot tell. The foreign crew
Held me unlucky, and they would have thrown
Me in the waves. But in a lull we drew
Near to a shore, deserted and unknown.
The steward lowered a boat and left me there alone.

“I saw him row away and climb on board,
I saw the ship depart with oar and sail,
While out to sea a peal of thunder roared
And black clouds gathered, lit with lightning pale.
Then wreckers, coming by a seaside trail,
Eager for plunder cast upon the shore,
Seized me and took me inland to a vale
Where their rude village lay. — My Pellenore,
Why should I linger on those days that I deplore?

“The barbarous people sold me as a slave,
Stood up at auction in a village mart.
And there the young chief Owen came and gave
Some pittance for me — with no kindly heart.
It had been touted that I eased the smart
Of a drunken wrecker knifed in savage brawl.
Just tolerated for my healing art,
I lived a slave about the Cambrian hall,
Roaming wild woods for simples till the frost of fall.

“You came and saved me from that hideous life,
You were my knight, the poor hag’s only friend,
And I will be your old and faithful wife
And ever on your growing fame attend.
Just as a squat and wrinkled toad may lend
Her aid to some tall lily’s opening flowers,
With love may watch, and haply may defend
That matchless beauty through the summer hours,
So I would love and guard with all my waning powers.”

“Ah, my poor Ro,” he said with eager eye,
“As I rode sadly in the forest ways
That winter day when I had thought to die,
A thrush began to sing in gladsome phrase
Until I dreamed of life and happier days.
And then your coming brought me life anew,
And now your tale of wonder seems to raise
My heart with hope that other dream was true —
That fortune yet may smile and fairer days ensue.

“Merlin is come at last from lands afar:
I marked him sailing through the moonlit air
And circling downward in his dragon car
To the royal garden, and he found me there
And offered words of cheer in my despair,
As if he knew your fate and all were well.
With dawn tomorrow both of us will fare
To the great seer, of your stepmother tell,
And hope that Merlin may reverse that cruel spell!”

The beldame answered him: “That cannot be.
Yet spiteful Brangan left one hope in truth:
Should my own husband dare to give it me,
From him alone I might receive my youth.
She meant to mock me. But the fays had ruth
Upon my wretched fate. In your dark hour
They let me win your hand by ways uncouth,
And I am wedded now — to knighthood’s flower.
I could be young again — the gift is in your power.”

“You tell,” he cried, “Of something I must dare.
“Was such the meaning Merlin would impart
By that strange rescue of a lady fair?”
And then he told her of Sir Brandimart
And of the dread kiss given with dauntless heart.
“Did the cold viper shape he feared before
Hide some young maid, transformed by wizard art?
Did he redeem her,” cried Sir Pellenore,
“With that bold kiss and she become a maid once more?”

He only thought aloud, but, she replied,
“I heard the tale in my dear father’s hall.
A swarthy troubadour one winter tide
Sang at our evening feast and held us all
Enchanted with the song. Well I recall
The wondrous turn of his most thrilling lay:
The scaly rind began to crack and fall
To either side, the vault shone clear as day,
And in the grave there stood a bright and gracious fay.

“That bold knight kissed a snake, and she grew fair;
If you but speak a wish, I shall be young.
Yet ponder well the danger you will dare
And judge, before you lend that wish a tongue.
If I live always old, so Brangan sung,
I shall be true and loyal all my days
And serve you humbly. And no man among
The youths at court will tempt with flattering praise.
I shall love you alone, as long as life delays.

“But, if I ever shall regain my youth,
Such was the tenor of her chanted spell,
With joy gone mad, I shall forget all truth
And in all companies will bear the bell.
And idle youths continually will mell
About your home and, gay at your despair,
Will tempt me forth to hunt in woodland dell.
That was the choice she gave you, Weigh with care —
Shall I be foul and faithful or be false and fair?”

The knight grew pale, as anxiously he thought,
“Can power of witchcraft govern even the soul
And turn it to ill ways? or long months fraught
With want and cruelty drive one sound and whole
To frenzy that will never bear control?”
And then returned the horror of Etarre —
Her maddening charm, her deft ways to cajole,
Her treachery while he ventured life afar,
And then her vacant house — the door still left ajar.

At length he said, “Alas, I fear the power
Of witchcraft over even the truest heart;
Yet yours is sane and kindly to this hour,
And savage captors felt your healing art.
If, in the future, power of ill could start
Your loyal soul, you would not now rejoice
Nor choose delight where I could have no part.
Three times you saved my life. I need no voice
Proclaiming your good will. To you I leave the choice!”

Straightway the fire burned low, the room grew dim.
Vaguely he saw her crown of thin white hair
Move downward, then thick darkness veiled from him
All but her pale dress in commotion there.
Then, by an ember's glow, he was aware
That her old, withered skin lay on the floor.
A strange gust raised it crackling in the air
And whirled it on the fire, which with low roar
Rose in clear flame and brilliant light began to pour.

Before him stood a slim and tender girl
In white and neatly fitted wedding dress,
With lustrous raven hair in graceful swirl
Over a snow white brow that seemed to bless.
Her fine eyes gleamed with love and truthfulness,
As large and dark as gentle woodland doe's.
A summer breeze might linger to caress
Her cheek — more soft and smooth than blushing rose.
The loveliest maid that he could dream before him glows.

Speechless a while he gazed, then with a sigh
He found no language but "My lovely Ro!"
From small and ruddy lips came her reply,
"Dear Pellenore, no longer name me so.
'Twas Brangan called me Ro. She bade me know
That name alone beneath her cruel spell
A symbol of my exile and my woe.
But in those golden days when all seemed well
My father and my mother named me — Rosabelle."

And, gazing at her young, magnetic face
And hearing her clear, gentle accent glide,
Unconsciously he raised his arms to embrace
The buoyant figure of his matchless bride.
But she drew back, as earnestly she cried:
"You have forgot. Dear Pellenore, beware
And weigh the evil that may soon betide.
It was decreed I should be false and fair."
Still gazing in her dark eyes — true beyond compare,

He said, "Your flower like person felt the spell,
But power of ill could never touch the soul.
No, always I will trust you, Rosabelle.
My life upon your faith!" — "Then I am whole,"
She cried. "When Brangan wove the spell's control,
She thought no man would dare, lest I prove vile.
I'll love you only, while our years shall roll!"
And, as he gazed in rapture all the while,
She overwhelmed him with the radiance of her smile.



REVIEWS AND OPINIONS



SHAKESPEARE'S INFLUENCE ON
SIR WALTER SCOTT

by WILMON BREWER

MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

Francestown, New Hampshire

PRICE \$1.50

REVIEWS AND OPINIONS

The task is now accomplished once for all. — *The New York Herald*.

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I am struck by the ease and clarity of the presentation. — Leslie Hotson: Professor of English, Haverford College; Folger Shakespeare Memorial Lecturer; Author of *The Death of Christopher Marlowe*, and of *The Commonwealth and the Restoration Stage*.

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The work appeals to me as well devised and thoroughly executed. I had no notion of the enormousness of Scott's debt to Shakespeare. A remarkable series of borrowings. — Paul Elmer More: Author of *Shelburne Essays* and of *The Greek Tradition*.

DANTE'S ECLOGUES

The Poetical Correspondence between Dante and
Giovanni del Virgilio

by WILMON BREWER

MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

Francestown, New Hampshire

PRICE \$2.00

REVIEWS AND OPINIONS

The little book is a sheer joy, not only because of its intrinsic interest but also for illustrating aspects of Dante's career which often are disregarded. In Dr. Brewer's translation the master's authentic voice is unmistakable. A concise, illuminating introduction to each of the four eclogues and a chapter full of interest on their literary importance. — *The Birmingham Post*, Birmingham, England.

A fascinating translation. — *The Church of England Newspaper*, London, England.

Many felicities of diction and punctilious scholarship. Two admirable portraits of the Florentine. — *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Few know that Dante wrote two eclogues in the evening of his life that will compare worthily with those of Vergil. No one until the appearance of this book ever read them adequately translated into English. Dr. Brewer is peculiarly fitted for such a task. He is gifted with poetic insight, which adds immensely to the value of correct form. The reader feels that he is reading the thought as Dante would like to have it conveyed in

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Does it beautifully. — *The Wichita Daily Eagle*.

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It reads easily and pleasantly, and the format is very attractive. — Edmund Garret Gardner: Professor of Italian, University College, London, England; Author of *Dante*.

I have read the book with delight. It is a real joy to have a translation so sensitive in its poetic phrasing. — Walter Llewellyn Bullock: Associate Professor of Italian, Chicago University; President of the American Association of Teachers of Italian.

A beautiful little book. Verse at once dignified and musical. — James G. Fraser: Author of *The Golden Bough* and of *Pausanias's Description of Greece*; Editor of *Letters of William Cowper*.

It is a perfect piece of bookmaking. The rendering of the four Latin poems preserves their quality admirably, and the contrast between the work of Dante and the work of Virgilio is very clear. The verse runs smoothly, with many happy turns of expression. The introductory

notes are adequate, and the essay is interesting. Beautiful reproductions of the bust. — Frank Chase: Reference Librarian of the Boston Public Library.

A most scholarly and thoroughly enjoyable book. — Fred B. Lund: Overseer Department of Classics, Harvard University; President of the Boston Classical Club.

I like the evident care and thoroughness. The eclogues are excellent, and the fine essay is lucid and full of nourishment for the mind. — William A. Falconer: Translator of Cicero for the Loeb Classical Library.

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A delightful book, so unexpected and precious in content and so elegant in format! It is a genuine blend of scholarship and literature. — Katharine Lee Bates: Professor of English, Wellesley College; Author of *America the Beautiful and Other Poems*.

A beautiful little book. It happily and poetically reproduces these two urbane, witty, yet pregnant poems and revealed to me a side of Dante's genius unguessed before. — E. R. B. Willis: Librarian, Cornell University.

I found peculiar pleasure in the second eclogue of Virgilio. The concluding essay says much in little space. I think it peculiarly interesting and helpful — especially in its excellent exposition of what led to pastoral poetry. — Le Baron Russell Briggs: Professor of English, Harvard University; Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; President Emeritus of Radcliffe College.

Dante is a favorite of my own. I am delighted with the translation of his *Eclogues*, which seems to me both faithful and eminently readable. It is a great convenience to have both sides of the correspondence in one volume and also to have the inviting study of its literary importance. — Gilmore Warner: Librarian, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.

It is a fine piece of work, admirable in conception, sure in execution. With rich poetic feeling and Dantean restraint and power. I like the prose portions of the work, as well as the poetry. — Amos R. Wells: Editor Emeritus of *The Christian Endeavor World*.

This is a perfect gem of a book, your little *Dante's Eclogues*. To read it is a real delight, and to study it is to learn how a book should be made. Concise, clear, always to the point are your explanations. Wisely you have avoided discussion; presented for each controversial problem the one most rational answer; and given thus to the whole a clean-cut, coherent significance. As to the translation, it is one of those rare versions that read like an original — and an original by a real poet. I congratulate you heartily, though not without envy. — Charles H. Grandgent: Chairman of the Division of Modern Languages, Harvard University; Professor of Italian Literature; Author of *Dante*; Editor of *Dante's Divine Comedy*.

SONNETS AND SESTINAS

by WILMON BREWER

MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

Francestown, New Hampshire

PRICE \$1.50

REVIEWS AND OPINIONS

A fresh and interesting volume both of original creation and of scholarship. Splendid histories of the sonnet and the sestina. — *State Journal*, Columbus, Ohio.

Mr. Brewer is an accomplished sonneteer in the tradition of the Elizabethan age. His work includes both original poems and translations. Detailed and thorough histories of the sonnet and of the sestina respectively. They possess what is important for history, authoritativeness. The book is well indexed. An excellent format, with a frontispiece of the author. — Simund Fogler: Poetry Editor, in *The Brooklyn Teacher*.

The author has presented a number of original sonnets and sestinas worthy of high rank. His translations into English from other tongues preserve both the structure and the finely chiseled thought of the original. In a history of the sonnet and a history of the sestina, he opens wide the doors to understanding and appreciation. A book out of the ordinary and deserving attention. — W. D. Manning in *The Democrat-Chronicle*, Rochester, New York.

The sonnets, as the author says in his preface, "illustrate almost every important form, the three called *Algernon's Philosophy*, *The Lily*, and *The Mystery of Life* represent varieties never before used in English. The sestinas represent every important form, the two called *At Gizeh* and *Shellfire* being the only English examples of their kind." Histories are given both of the

sonnet and the sestina. The book will be treasured by those into whose possession it comes. — *Belfast News-Letter*, Belfast, Ireland.

Two difficult forms of poetry are presented with skill, information, and understanding in this very interesting volume. The author's verse has merit of its own and also has value as an illustration of the many types of the sonnet and the sestina. Both forms are a challenge to poets. The sestina is the more interesting because the greater difficulty of its form has preserved it from so much mishandling. The distinguishing trait is that its key words are repeated in stanza after stanza, although with a different order. Two stanzas from the author's ingenious *Meditation by Moonlight* will make this plain.

When the full moon turns night to softer day.
With ebon shadows under grove and tree,
I seek white lawns to watch the clear beams play
On silvered branch and tree-top. Memory
Joins in the present wonder of my way,
Revealing moonlight scenes by land and sea.

Dry, sparkling drifts are billowing like a sea,
As the cold moon succeeds the winter day.
They change and hide from sight and memory
All track of man and beast, for chill winds play,
Sweeping from snowy hill and laden tree
White, dazzling clouds to whirl them on their way.

— C. B. F. in *The Cincinnati Times Star*.

A scholarly and fascinating history of the origin, growth, and mutation of two forms, one of which is employed by practically every poet and the other is shunned by all except a few. — *The American Mercury*.

Many examples of the sonnet and the sestina. A book

that should restore luster to some of these forgotten forms. — Hildegard Fillmore in *The Survey Graphic*.

Delightful reading. Among the sonnets I should think it invidious to select one. Among the sestinas I should mention *At Ghizeh*, not necessarily as being superior to the others, but as one that did appeal to me with special force. The historical essays have compressed into wonderfully small compass the knowledge gained by profound research into European literature. I can appreciate them from my own adventures in the realm of historical research. — H. Addington Bruce: Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Former President of the Boston Browning Society, Former President of the Boston Authors Club, Author among other works of *The Riddle of Personality*, *Self Development*, and *Your Growing Child*.

The Christmas poems are in a class by themselves. Wilmon Brewer is among the very few persons who seem unimpeded by the sonnet form, and the atmosphere of Great Hill must be peculiarly favorable to poetry. — Le Baron Russell Briggs.

A fine and rare combination of excellence in critical interpretation and of deft and happy original achievement in the difficult but lovely verse with which it deals. The work gives me great pleasure — especially some of that in lighter vein: *Algernon*, *The Bee*, and *The Recipe*. But the whole of it, in this rough world, is refreshing to the spirit. — Alwin Thaler: Professor of English, University of Tennessee; Author of *Shakespeare's Silences* and of *Shakespeare and Democracy*.

The poetical part of the book shows great versatility and charming style. The dignity is admirable but not to the exclusion of humor, as in *Algernon's socks*! I was surprised at all the variations of the sonnet. I particular-

ly enjoyed *Meditation by Moonlight*, *Bluebirds*, and the striking *At Ghizeh*. An excellent study of the sonnet and the sestina, lucidly written and amazingly comprehensive. — J. Milton French: Chairman of the Department of English, Rutgers University.

An uncommonly able and complete account of these forms. To write so many excellent sestinas with such an appearance of ease is a remarkable accomplishment. Both the translations and the originals are graceful and skillful, and the translations show delicacy and sympathy in rendering two poets who are not easy to reproduce in English. They suggest the music of Italian remarkably well. — Elizabeth Manwaring: Professor of English, Wellesley College; Author of *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England*.

What delighted me was the workmanship of the poetry. Everything is done with exquisite care and reverence for poetic form and for words. There is not a careless or jarring line in the whole book. I was particularly glad to have the history of the sonnet. I had not in my hands any clear, satisfactory account such as this. — Stephen Hayes Bush: Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages, Iowa University.

The sonnets made pleasant reading — smooth, accomplished, and various as they are. Some of them offered plenty of surprises. For example, it is curious to observe in *The Witch Hazel* how little one cared about the absence of rhyme. From *Algernon* to *The Mystery* spans an immense range. — Harold Files: Professor of English, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

I have read it from cover to cover, pleased with the poetry and also with the felicities of prose style and impressed by the scholarship. — G. H. Maynadier: Professor Emeritus of English, Harvard University; Author

of *The Arthur of the English Poets*; Editor of *The Works of Daniel Defoe* and *The Works of Henry Fielding*.

The history of the sonnet is going to be useful and that of the sestina invaluable to me, but my greatest pleasure came from the translations, especially those of the short Chinese poems. — Merritt Y. Hughes: Chairman of the Department of English, University of Wisconsin; Author of *Virgil and Spenser*; Editor of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and of *Paradise Regained, the Minor Poems, and Samson Agonistes*.

It is a beautiful book, in which I find many things to enjoy. The histories of the sonnet and the sestina are very valuable and much more ample than I have found elsewhere. And to good teaching it adds good works. *The Nun* reminds me of the poetry of Christina Rossetti and of Tennyson's poem *St. Agnes' Eve*. *Sonnets from the Chinese* are lovely.

When the light shadows on the mountains change
Or the white moon is shining in the sky
has the delicate touch that only the East seems to know, whether in painting or in words. The work is fashioned so skillfully that a reader is likely to forget the difficulty of the form. — Mabel Maxson: Librarian, Milton College, Milton, Wisconsin.

The history of the sonnet is very valuable and will be a constant source of reference for me. — Lewis G. Sterner: Author of *A History of the Sonnet in America*.

Something never attempted before. A charming and scholarly book. The format is in Brookes More's best style, and one can say nothing beyond that. — Henry Harmon Chamberlin: Former President of the American Poetry Association, Former President of the Omar Khayyam Society of America; Author of *The Master Knot, Sir Aldengar, and Horace Talks*.

LIFE AND POEMS OF BROOKES MORE

by WILMON BREWER

MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

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PRICE \$1.50

REVIEWS AND OPINIONS

"His ideal was to write little and polish it with care," says Wilmon Brewer in introducing Brookes More. Mr. More wrote poetry for more than forty years before publishing a book. Because of the high standard which he set for himself, the total extent of his work is not large.

High craftsmanship is found in his lyrical forms. Mr. More experimented successfully with the triolet, villanelle, rondeau, rondel, pantoum, sestina and the simpler kinds of verse. His sonnet sequence called *The Lover's Rosary* and his narrative poems, such as *A Convent Legend* and the powerful *Orpheus and Eurydice*, are distinguished and important. Much of his best work has gone into translation. As far back as the year 1890, he began his version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He destroyed and rewrote the first thousand lines. These are carefully wrought poems by a man who lived with them a long time. — *The Oakland Tribune*.

Prominent for many years in the literary as well as as the business world, Brookes More has passed his eightieth milestone. His formative years were spent in St. Louis. During this period one of his major works was begun — his translation in blank verse of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His biographer includes a short life of

the poet, the best of his lyrics and narrative poems, and a critical commentary. — *Salt Lake Tribune*.

The book is well planned and executed. It gives a biographical account of Mr. More, a critical appraisal of his work, and a representative selection of his poems. — Dorothea Lawrance Mann in the *Bulletin* of the Boston Authors Club.

A handsome book, with admirable photographic illustrations. Until I read the excellent biography, I had no idea what an interesting and significant life Mr. More has lived. The poems are of unexpected depth and artistry, and read after an acquaintance with Mr. More's life, take on new meaning. — James R. Foster: Associate Professor of English, Long Island University.

I think the biography is excellent — interesting throughout and done in the best possible taste. The selections from Mr. More's poetry give a good idea of the scope and variety of his work. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book. — Arthur Stanwood Pier: Author, teacher of English, former Editor of *The Harvard Graduates Magazine*.

A beautiful volume of splendid poems. An admirable account of a life, by an able and discriminating biographer. In every regard a fine achievement. — Nixon Waterman: Poet, Lecturer, and Journalist; Former President of the Boston Authors Club; Author of *A Rose to the Living*.

Will find many interested readers. — Olga Erbe: Librarian Adelphi College, Garden City, New York.

Most interesting biography and delightful poems. One of those books I like to keep handy and dip into from

time to time. — Winthrop Packard: Author and Editor; for many years Secretary of the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

The book comes to add beauty and inspiration to my library, where several young ministers of my church are continually reading in search of goodness and truth. — Gregorio Aglipay: Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church.

The narrative and comment gave me a clearer idea of the obstacles that Mr. More had to meet and of the controversies in literature. I was interested especially in the account of his reading and his methods of composition. I congratulate Mr. More on being the worthy subject of so good a book. Winslow Loveland: Professor of English, Boston University.

The interesting volume will find a permanent and useful place on our shelves. — Herbert M. Sewell, the Library, Oberlin College.

What a labor of love and appreciation — under such an attractive format! One sees what one has always known, that he accepted none but the best. — Alice Brown: Author of Fiction, Drama, and Biography.

ABOUT POETRY AND OTHER MATTERS

Seven Essays: American Verse before the Year 1700. — *Werther*, Goethe's Earliest Masterpiece. — Shakespeare in the Career of Sir Walter Scott. — Vergil's *Georgics* — Towards Universal Peace. — Faith Is Normal and Essential. — Life beyond Death.

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MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

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One more in the series of brilliant and fascinating books by this authority on literature. — *Democrat-Chronicle*, Rochester, New York.

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The essays in this little volume are scholarly and are valuable for the new light they shed on certain literary figures. They are also good reading. There is an interesting discussion of American verse before the year 1700. Mr. Brewer illustrates his points with apt quotations from the work of these little known poets. An essay entitled "Goethe's Earliest Masterpiece" recounts in detail the circumstances which attended the writing of *Sorrows of Young Werther*, a novel which epitomizes the spirit of early romanticism and which achieved great popularity on the Continent and later in England. A brief discussion of Shakespeare in the career of Sir Walter Scott is enormously stimulating. A brilliant study of Vergil's *Georgics* and three essays on Peace, Faith, and Life beyond Death complete a book that will delight

every discriminating reader. — Joan Cranshaw in *Weekly Feature Service*.

Wilmon Brewer, whose picture is on the dust jacket, has written an interesting book. The first essay, *American Verse before the Year 1700*, should be read by every student of early American literature. — *The Star-News*, Pasadena, California.

A valuable contribution to American criticism. — George Snell in *The Tribune*, Salt Lake City.

The shorter essays deal with themes of perennial interest — universal peace, faith, and immortality. — *San Francisco Argonaut*.

It is a beautiful piece of book-making, and the essays have exact scholarship, clarity, and grace. Especially enjoyable to me were those on Goethe's *Werther* and Vergil's *Georgics*, in each of which literary history and literary criticism so happily blend to explain the origin of a famous work, to estimate its qualities, and to trace its influence. Of particular interest is the demonstration of the important effects of the *Georgics* in English poetry. — William Hall Clawson: Professor of English, University College, Toronto, Canada.

Of the different essays the one which appeals to me most is the study of Vergil. Then, because of my keen interest in Goethe, the essay on *Werther* held my attention closely. The whole book strikes me as distinctly an example of research used for productive thinking. — H. Addington Bruce: Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Former Editor of *The New York Tribune Review*; Former President of the Boston Authors Club and of the Boston Browning Society; Author among other works of *The Riddle of Personality*, *Self Development*, and *Your Growing Child*.

The essay on American verse is of particular interest to us, because we are making an extraordinary collection of American literature. It is indeed a welcome addition. — Leslie W. Dunlop: Assistant Librarian, Wisconsin University.

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ADVENTURES IN VERSE

by WILMON BREWER

MARSHALL JONES COMPANY

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PRICE \$2.00

One of only two works of poetry displayed at the Boston Herald Book Fair, October 1945, as among the thousand best books published in the United States during the year.

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A significant addition to the heritage of poetry. Mr. Brewer has created in readable style poems in the octave, sonnet, and sestina, as well as the triolet, rondel, rondeau, and pantoum. His original poems deserve recognition. And really scholarly work is represented in the translations, chiefly from French and Italian, into various forms unfamiliar to present-day writers. One of the briefer pieces is the little lyric entitled *To Sylvia* written in the year 1660 by the French poet Jacques Ranchin:

The first noon in the month of May
Was the happiest moment in my life.
I felt a hope so bright and gay,
The first noon in the month of May!
I saw, I loved you, at midday.
Ah Sylvia, if you'll be my wife,
The first noon in the month of May
Was the happiest moment in my life.

The volume is beautifully illustrated in color from paintings by Maurice W. Parker. It should find a secure place on the shelves of many earnest students of poetry. — Albert Jakeman in *The Springfield Republican*.

Adventures in Verse is a beautifully bound and printed volume. Maurice Parker's soft, impressionistic sea and landscapes are reproduced in color. Mr. Brewer is already famous for his use of difficult forms of verse. The sestina, triolet, rondeau, and pantoum are precisely executed. The poem called *Wild Geese* is in a form never before attempted in English. Our favorite is a sonnet called *The Song Sparrow*. Birds figure prominently in Mr. Brewer's verse, and we love his icy tributes to winter. — Olga Owens in *The Boston Sunday Post*.

These poems have depth and understanding, which comes only from a wealth of experience, and so have an appeal to the public at large. — Sidney Lewis: Editor of Crown Publications, New York City.

Translations and original poems in precise forms not often used today: the octave, sonnet, and sestina; the Sapphic and Alcaic; the triolet, rondel, rondeau, and pantoum. Many poems illustrate a form never before used in English. Where possible, information is given concerning the subject and the form. The translations are clear and scholarly, the original poems strike a quiet note that is pleasant to hear. — *The World of Books*.

A poet's book for poets. Mr. Brewer is an earnest student of unusual and little known forms. A number of them he has made available to American writers for the first time, either in his translations or in his original verse. He has also a deep poetical awareness. — William E. Harris in *Rewrite*.

A splendid piece of work, with most fitting and admirable illustrations. Indispensable to the writer and teacher of verse. — Delbert M. Staley: Founder and President of Staley College of the Spoken Word, Brookline, Mass.

The poems show true inspiration and great power and dexterity of expression and are touched with that divine afflatus that non-poets can wonder at and thrill to yet somehow never attain. There are verses here for every palate. I cannot mention by title all that I like; but the powerful *Storm in Malaya*, *Dejection at Evening*, *Charm of the Woods*, and *Sonnets for the Christmas Time* have given me more sheer enjoyment than anything I have read this year. *Mallows*, *The Song Sparrow*, and others are excellent too. They all abound in exquisite art. — James R. Foster: Chairman of the Department of English, Long Island University; Author of *The Pre-Romantic Novel in England*.

The various forms are a delight, and the subject matter is as varied as the form. The delicacy of many of the poems, particularly the triolets, reminds me of the grace of French verse, which our English tongue seldom attains. The translations bear no hint of the toil that went into their making, but sing like bird on bough. — Mabel Maxson: Librarian, Milton College, Milton, Wisconsin.

I have read *Adventures in Verse* with real interest. Both the poems that are entirely original and the translations have a great deal of charm. *The Pledge of Constantine* seems to me an especially fine moving piece of work. — Arthur Stanwood Pier: Author, Teacher of English, Former Editor of *The Harvard Graduates Magazine*.

The original poems are charming, both in mood and in phrasing. When we turn to the translation, I am amazed at the dexterity and sympathy with which they overcome the double difficulty of translating the language of the authors and then of finding a set of rhymes which represent the rhyme of the originals. I

think the device of printing introductions before the various poems is very valuable, for they not only give necessary information but whet the reader's curiosity and make him eager to see the verse form in action. — Frank W. C. Hersey: Former Instructor in English, Harvard University; Lecturer on Travel, Literature, and the Art of the Modern Theater; Editor of Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*; Author of *English Composition* and of *Writing Well*.

I have given myself the treat of reading the volume through — most of it aloud. These are delightful adventures into the field of poetry. — Daniel L. March: President of Boston University; Former President of the Boston Authors Club; Former Governor of the Boston Rotary; Author of *The Faith of the People's Poet*, *The Youth of America*, and *The American Canon*.

Charming verse with splendid illustrations. — Charles Jay Connick; Artist in Stained Glass; Author of *Windows of Old France* and of *Adventures in Light and Color*.

I am delighted with it. I like *Wild Geese* and its form and the thoughts *While Reading Beowulf*. Then I like *At the Birthplace of Whistler*. My favorite is *The Plum*, a translation which reads like an original. — Rudolf Kirk: Professor of English, Rutgers University; Editor with Clara M. Kirk of *Types of English Poetry*, in the series *Types of English Literature*.

What an attractive book *Adventures in Verse* is — just to look at, and what pleasurable reading it makes! The Parker pictures are lovely. The pantoums fascinate me. And always I love the unexpected humor — as for instance *In Early Summer*. — Virginia Dean: Administrative Assistant, Department of Drama, Yale University; Owner and Director of The South Shore Theater, Cohasset, Mass.

A most interesting book. It seems to me a new direction for research. — Henry Charles Lahee: Author of *Famous Singers of Yesterday; Opera Stories in Rhyme, and Annals of Music in America*.

It is a lovely thing, solace in these harsh days, not only to the eye and ear but to the "eyen of the minde" and to the listening spirit. Few may be sufficiently expert in metrics to appreciate the interesting experiments in Englishing so many delicately exotic forms. But one would have to be altogether deaf and blind to miss the gay freshness of such poems as *The Plum* or the early morning grace and human kindness of thought in *First of May*, or the delicate rosebud charm of *The Rose and the Poet*. Among poems which I especially like are *The Buddhist Pilgrim*, *The Outdoorsman*, *Peaceful Thames*, *Her Bird*, *The Song Sparrow*, and the powerful *Storm in Malaya*, not to mention the very interesting *Exile of the Sprites*. And there is a tale to draw children from their play in *The Pledge of Constantine*. — Alwin Thaler: Professor of English, University of Tennessee; Author of *Shakespeare's Silences*, *Shakespeare and Democracy*, and *Shakespeare and Sir Philip Sidney*.

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Their rain of iron, their golden voiced refrain.

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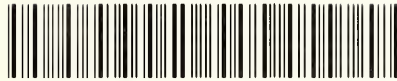
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